

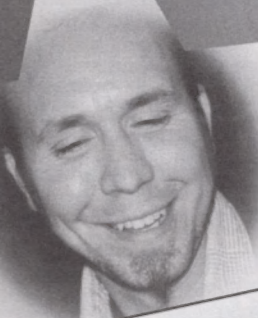
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Vol. 2

#2

KICKS, CHICKS AND FLICKS!

# HEAD IN A MILK BOTTLE



**Dave!**



**Tim H**



**Tim S!**



**Jeff!**

## The Criminals!

## PLUS

J. MICHAEL MCCARTHY

THE ZODIAC KILLERS



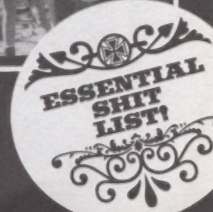
THE SCREAMIN' MEE-MEES



THE HONKEYS



REVIEWS





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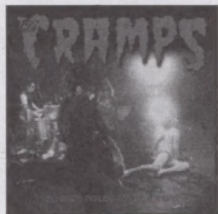
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# HEAD IN A MILK BOTTLE

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## KICKS, CHICKS AND FLICKS!

We went fifteen years without a new issue and we're back already with another monster one. Inspired by the old men's magazines that covered music, entertainment and girlie pictures, this issue is jammed full of interviews and reviews of dick shakin' music as usual, but we also bring you a couple of interviews with two up-and-coming b-movie/cult film directors and also witness the return of Miss Milk Bottle! Thanks to everyone who bought a copy of our last issue and if you don't have one you can still get one from our P.O. Box, as well as our fine distributors, but they won't last forever so get one while you have the chance.

Much news of concern around the River City includes the interruption of KDHX-FM 88.1's Internet audio feed that gave the world access to the world's greatest community radio station. The story here is the RIAA has made unreasonable demands on licensing fees to continue service and there's no good word on that. For more info visit [www.boycott-riaa.com](http://www.boycott-riaa.com).

On a more positive note, The Cripplers will be going on tour soon to support their LP/CD release on Dionysus Records, *One More For The Bad Guys*. Tomorrow's Caveman of last issue's cover story fame has just released a BIG 14-track CD entitled TODAY!, and will be hosting a listening party for it soon at Tangerine. The best way to get either of these hot new releases is to go see the bands at one of their shows, but if you are like me and don't get out much, they are available by mail order, via the Internet, or ask your local record store clerk. Be sure to visit [www.garagepunk.com](http://www.garagepunk.com), the Internet home of The Wayback Machine (KDHX), for news, info, and Web links to all the bands, artists, and subjects covered in *Head in a Milk Bottle* and much more!



If you think you can write, review, interview, draw comics, have other news you think would be of interest, take photos, or in any other way contribute to the 'zine, send us an e-mail or send us snailmail. I personally encourage all bands and artists who want some FREE exposure on the Internet to visit [www.lamebasement.com](http://www.lamebasement.com) and find out how it's done. There's lots of thanks to go around for all that placed ads to help us with printing costs and all who contributed articles or reviews. Most of all, thanks to kopper (for whom this all is possible) and Bill Streeter, who put in some late nights with the final layout.

Enough can never be said about the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and those killed in the line of duty that day while saving innocent lives. That attack was on each and every one of us as a taxpaying U.S. citizen. New York City and Washington, DC just happened to be in the way. I'm not here to preach or rant, but if you value your freedom, which has already been violated, do something to defend it. And don't forget to support the local charities that have been shortchanged due to the needs of the relief agencies helping in disaster recovery. Thanks, and enjoy the 'zine! -bob t



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# One More for the Bad Guys.

Interview by Bob Thurmond. Photos by Pamela Rodgers.

For some years now, The Crippleers have been pile-driving rabid fans with their brand of hard-nosed Missouri rock 'n' roll in and around their original home of Columbia, as well as St. Louis (where they've developed quite a local following of hardcore fans), with an occasional road trip out of the area. In the last issue of HIAMB, Kopper wrote about The Crippleers and what was rumored for a while to be their last show. We also scooped the news that the Dionysus Records Empire had picked up The Crippleers after a last-ditch effort spearheaded by guitarist Tim Sullivan to find a label that would be interested in releasing their white-hot material. With *One More for the Bad Guys* released on CD as well as good old vinyl LP this month there came a change of plans for the Missouri heavyweight champs of garage punk. They were forced to rethink their original plans on breaking up and actually look forward to touring in support of the new record. How's that for an about-face? The HIAMB rookie interview crew of Pam and Bob met up with these rock 'n' roll grapplers at Las Palmas Mexican Restaurant and Bar in the shadows of Lambert-St Louis Int'l Airport to find out more. Over margaritas, Coronas, and the best damned Mexican food in the area we discussed where they've been and where they're headed.

**HIAMB: While we're waiting on Jeff, can you give us a quick history of The Crippleers?**

**Tim Hopmeier:** I moved down to Columbia because Ray and Martin (Hank) from Tomorrow's Caveman and I had a band back in '93 and I was driving down to Columbia for two years, like once a week which is an incredible task to do. And so I just hustled and moved there and I offered to move in with both of them. I've been friends with Martin and Ray since 1985—we've been best friends. We were in a previous band called *The Neanderthals*. It was a lot of fun.

**HIAMB: When was that?**

**Tim H:** '93 to '95 was when I was with them in Columbia. It was Ray, Martin, and me. We all went to the same high school.

**HIAMB: So when did The Crippleers begin to take shape as an actual band?**

**Tim H:** Well, Dave and I met, and we had this friend named Jason Conner who wanted to form this band called *The Argonauts*. He had been in a band before that with these guys from *The Untamed Youth*. I met Dave when I played with The

## An Interview with THE CRIPPLEERS



**Tim H:** You're talking about a guy whose biggest problem before a show is what color belt to wear. This was a twenty-minute, almost tear-jerking ordeal with this guy! He'd get so upset... Should it be the brown or the black belt? But again, he had a great voice. And then Dave went to play with Jeff and I don't really know how I exactly got involved. I guess Dave just mentioned that I should come jam with them one night.

**Dave:** Well, we tried practicing as a two-piece. We were going to try to be like The Revelators, but after just two practices, we were like, "fuck that, we don't have a bass."

**HIAMB: So The Revelators had a lot to do with The Crippleers starting out?**

**Dave:** Jeff was friends with those guys and I had put up an ad in a record store looking for somebody to play with. They had seen it and then they knew Jeff was playing and that's how they called me up. And we needed a bass player bad. The Revelators didn't sound bad 'cause when he (John Schooley) played guitar he'd have two amps. I don't know if he had a split or what...

**Tim H:** I think it was a split.

**HIAMB: You could run two cords out of your guitar.**

**Dave:** Yeah, I mean, that's how they got a nice, full, low-end bass sound on their recordings.

**Tim H:** So we started playing weekly next to Shattered Nightclub in downtown Columbia where they had this practice space. We started practicing and I sang a few and Jeff came and played a few of his originals and it just took off after that. Then our friend Chris Raymond kind of weaseled his way into the deal, which was OK because he looked cool; he had to rock! And he had a killer guitar...

**Dave:** At the time we thought he was one of our close friends.

**Tim H:** [Laughing] And he was a decent guitarist at first, too!

**Dave:** He was begging me to join the band.

**Tim H:** I don't think it was a mistake because he looked cool and we actually did a live video of "Bad Reputation." And everything was fine except that he had a substance abuse problem. He would come to practice so drunk, I mean the guy could barely strap his guitar on, ya know? And we were like, "hey, we have a show next week..."

**Dave:** My favorite line was, "So, Chris, where's your guitar?" "Oh, it's in the shop." And the whole time we thought it was in the guitar shop getting fixed, it was actually in the pawnshop.

**Tim H:** We had to play through Jeff's amp—both guitars through one amp. We even ran the vocals through that one amp. So, one night Chris was really drunk and, after one of the dumbest practices we ever had, he was totally mouthing off to all of us. And I'm a pretty

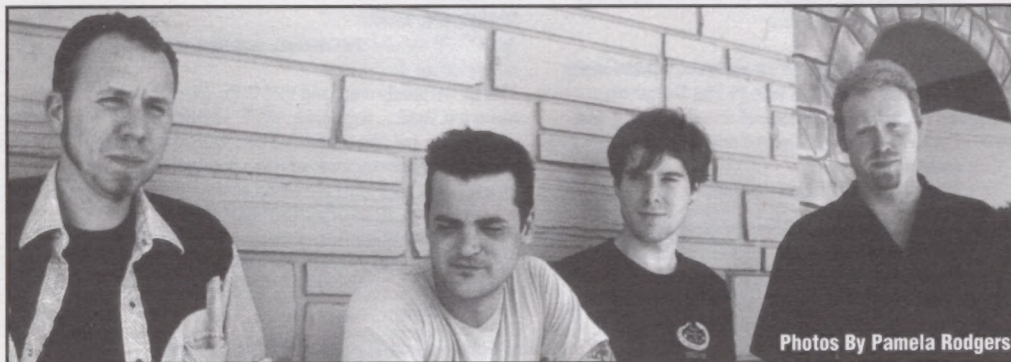
mean, violent guy, anyway, but he came upstairs and started mouthing off to Dave and I basically. I was so sick of this. I said "Chris, what do you want? I'm not like a sober drunk counselor here, but why can't you save your drinking until after we fucking play? I mean, what the fuck? We're trying to have a band practice here! What do you care about? Do you want to be a professional drunk or do you want to play?" And he got right in my face, so I hit him.

**Dave:** It was like something out of the fucking *Incredible Hulk*. Tim is small, but Chris is like puny, and Tim just went after him all in one motion.

**Tim H:** This was my friend and I would never do this unless you just crossed the line, you know. You might as well have just cursed my family, and that's basically what he did.

**Dave:** And we were all pretty distraught over it and Chris goes back after Tim again and before you know it he's got Chris face-first in the mud choking him again, and we're just like, "Chris, stop it. Quit while you're ahead."

**Tim H:** It went on for hours. He ended up coming to my house and I threw him through my window and then we made up as friends, which is



Photos By Pamela Rodgers

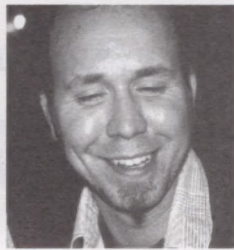
Argonauts. So it was us three, and then this other guy, Nate, the lead guitar player, so The Argonauts was this four-piece band. I thought it was great. We sounded as authentic as any garage band from that era. We were good. Jason Conner had the best voice for vocals, too.

**HIAMB: You guys had your own PA, and a lo-fi '60s sound?**

**Tim H:** To get the '60s sound we sang through my 50-watt Fender amp that had reverb and we hooked the mike up to get the vocals. It had a great sound effect. Jason Conner was kind of the leader of the band and he was probably the worst musician in the band. I mean, he had a great voice but he would start playing guitar and he would play this thing like he was cutting sushi. He wasn't really actually playing. He got frustrated one time and just got up and left. He said, "I quit. I'm out of here."

**Dave Devine:** He started bitching and I just got up and walked out. He kept bitching for like five more minutes before he realized that I had left the fucking room.





kinda funny. And after that all went down we got Ray. Good old Ray who's now in Tomorrow's Caveman. He became our second guitarist. He was in the band for about six months. He actually played guitar on some of the songs on our new CD, about six of them, I think. The second solo on "Rock 'n' Roll Snake" is Ray's. At the same time Ray and I were also playing together in this house bar Elvis-type band, and all of his attention was focused on that band instead of The Cripplees for some reason. So we decided to give him the boot and that's when we picked up Tim (Sullivan). We decided Tim was going to be our rhythm guitarist at Martin & Alison's wedding. So it's this big weird incestual...

[Jeff King enters the room. Bob gives him a stack of *Head in the Milk Bottle* and Jeff makes sounds of being impressed. This is when Pam snaps a picture of him flipping through the magazine.]

**Jeff:** This looks pretty good! I saw the cover on the web site and I said, "cool." This is fun. I really like Matt Bug's article (on Joey Ramone).

**HIAMB: So, Jeff, where are you from?**

**Jeff:** I'm from the county. I've lived in Columbia for about five years now.

**HIAMB: So, The Crippler is a wrestler right?**

**Dave:** The Crippler is actually a guy that wrestles named Chris Benoit. His new name is "The Canadian Crippler." He's my favorite wrestler, so that's why we picked the name, The Cripplees.

**HIAMB: What about a dream gig? If you guys could open up for any band who would it be?**

**Tim Sullivan:** It would probably be... bring back Johnny Thunders & The Heartbreakers, or the New York Dolls, Shane MacGowan... Opening up for The Rolling Stones, that would be sweet, too.

**Jeff:** Opening up doesn't mean anything to me—it's just who you know. But going on tour with a band, now that would be a good experience! I would not want to go on tour with Johnny Thunders, you know? I like his music, but I'm sure that he was not fun to be around.

**HIAMB: What's the average Crippler fan like?**

**Jeff:** I don't think there is a classification.

**HIAMB: Are they usually intoxicated?**

**Tim H:** Extremely! [Laughs.]

**Jeff:** In Columbia, the average Crippler fan is a total degenerate.

**Dave:** Total redneck death metal fans.

**Tim H:** You're talking drunk, heroin addicts in wheelchairs.

**Jeff:** We're not talking college students...

**Tim H:** No, we're talking about the biker crowd.

**Dave:** You go to our shows and you see all sorts of people.

**Grace:** [sitting at the next table] The sportos and motorheads, geeks, sluts, bloods, wasteoids, dweebies, dickheads... they all adore 'em! They think they're righteous dudes!

**Jeff:** Yeah, you see lotsa crazy shit at our shows.

**Tim H:** Guys in sweaters to guys wearing wife-beaters.

**Jeff:** In Columbia when we played we saw everything from naked girls to guys in wheelchairs.

**HIAMB: Hey, I saw a guy in a wheelchair on your web page!**

**Tim H:** Yeah, he's like leaned up throwing his head around amping it. I love it. That guy's crazy.

**HIAMB: So how do you view yourselves?**

**Jeff:** We are definitely committed.

**Dave:** We're not slackers. We don't just go out there and portray the pompous, arrogant rock-star attitude.

**Tim S:** I certainly didn't want anyone thinking that we were gonna give up until a record contract came along.

**Jeff:** It's just that at the time, this band played for four years together before it even came up...

**Tim H:** This band can't break up and as I've said before, there's no band loyalty and nothing ever gets done. Everybody plays with everybody and nobody ever cares about sticking with the band you're in.

**Dave:** We're not lackadaisical about getting shows. I mean, we're the type of band where if somebody calls up and says, "hey, I'm throwing a keg party tomorrow night and we need a band," then we'd go play it.

**Tim H:** We just want to jam.

**Dave:** I think we lost fans in Columbia because we didn't play the type of music that they thought we should play. The college crowd in Columbia didn't like us because they thought we were too punk, I think.

**Tim H:** If we would have played stuff like Insane Clown Posse and Slayer then we would've been popular as hell! That's the basis of the Columbia music scene right there.

**HIAMB: Now that you're all here, please state your name and your role in The Cripplees.**

**Jeff King:** I play guitar and sometimes sing and I'm having some sort of red drink, probably a margarita.

**Tim S:** Guitarist extraordinaire.

**HIAMB: What kind of guitar do you play?**

**Tim S:** I've got the George Lynch special, the Flying V, and I'm having Coronas.

**Tim H:** Bass and sometimes vocals. I am drinking a blue-sky margarita and I am ripped. I play a Rickenbacker bass.

**Dave:** I bang the drums and I'm not drinking anything because I haven't seen the waiter in about three hours. The way these guys are acting, I don't know if we need anymore drinks or not.

**HIAMB: You've heard people compare your band to others. What's the most ridiculous one anyone's ever come up with?**

**Tim H:** Tell you the truth, everyone that I know of that has ever compared us to other bands has done so in a way that it's been almost like a compliment. I mean, we've been compared to The Dead Boys, The Lord High Fixers, the Oblivians, the Heartbreakers, DMZ. I mean, I'm not going to argue with any of that stuff! You want to compare us to them? Go ahead!

**Jeff:** The Reverend Horton Heat's bass player thinks we sound like Green Day shit.

**Tim H:** Yeah, this is coming from a pompous guy who has to get up on his own individual fucking stage with a little spotlight on his head so that everybody can kiss his ass! We're not the ones selling our souls for every little TV spot and commercial, you know? I mean how dare you compare us to that?

**HIAMB: Never mind the fact you sound nothing like Green Day! So what has been your most embarrassing moment on stage?**

**Dave:** Easy! Very first show...

**Dave:** Someone we won't name gets up to the front of the stage, counts off "1,2,3,4" while he's jumping up in the air and doing like a Pete Townsend-type of thing and as he comes down his leg kicks the cord out of the guitar. "1,2,3,4..." and then silence.

**Tim H:** Jeff stood up on his amp at Washington University and slipped off and fell on the ground.

**Jeff:** That show was fun.

**Dave:** I don't mind those embarrassing moments. They happen because we go all-out on stage and we play 110%. Jeff gets out there and just goes fucking wild.

**Jeff:** You ask us this question: What defines a rock 'n' roll band?

**HIAMB: OK, what?**

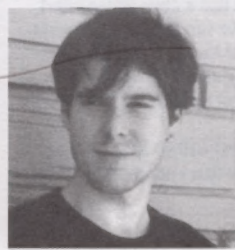
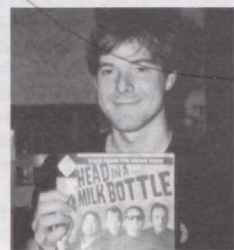
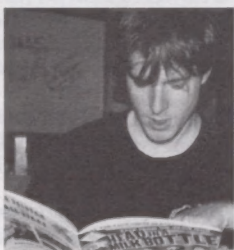
**Jeff:** I will answer that and say that first, if you're not sweating, you're shit.

**Tim H:** Definitely man, and that is the great thing about our band... regardless, we do put on a good show. We're not like little timid deer caught in the headlights up there, especially this guy [points to Tim Sullivan]. All of us are pretty confident when we're up there. None of us have stage fright except for just a little before we go on. Once we get up there it's like who cares, and I think that's why people like us. We're entertainers and we just rock 'n' roll.

**HIAMB: Do any of you ever get out in the audience while you play?**

**Tim H:** This guy [points to Tim Sullivan again] gets out in the audience every single show. Stage-wise he is definitely the best rhythm guitarist we've ever had, and sound-wise, too.

**Jeff:** We have the ability, the environment, and the resources to kick ass.







**Tim H:** Yeah, and the knowledge. We could play for 10,000 people and it would be the exact same show as if we played for 50, because I don't think that any of us would be distraught by that whole thing.

**HIAMB: You ever piss off a club owner and just let him have it?**

**Tim H:** Nah...

**Tim S:** The guy from the Down Under (in Columbia) sent us a 12-pack because the PA busted on us.

**Tim H:** Yeah, I think that guy legitimately likes us. We are always good sports wherever we play and they have no reason not to ask us back.

**Dave:** This one club owner in Columbia had the gall to tell us we were unprofessional. We were like, "wait a minute, every time we play your club we have to hookup the sound system!"

**Jeff:** Yeah, the place has since closed.

**HIAMB: Do you have any special equipment that gives you your signature sound?**

**Jeff:** I bought an amp that seemed a reasonable price, I plugged my guitar in, and started playing.

**Dave:** I just replaced the heads on my drums two months ago and those were the same heads I'd had on it since I bought the drums six years ago and they'd probably been on those drums for years before that. Different styles of amps and guitars will give you different sounds but the way we play and the style we play—it's still gonna sound like The Crippleers no matter what. That's the thing about the authentic blues artists. Back in the day, everybody loved the sound that their amps made, and you know, they didn't go out and buy a specific amp at the time. They went down to the corner pawnshop and only had a couple bucks to buy a piece of equipment, and so they ended up buying the cheapest thing there.

**HIAMB: Lots of beautiful sexy women will be reading this interview. Is there any personal message you'd like to send to these women?**

**Jeff:** There's only one girl for me. That's my girlfriend, Jennifer. That's the girl for me.

**Tim H:** I really couldn't tell them anything. But if they want somebody really dysfunctional, then I'm the one for them! I am extremely dysfunctional. I have no idea what's going on at any time. It would be nice just to be hit on once in a while in this band! Girls don't come up to me and hit on me, and I'm too shy to do it.

**HIAMB: You guys played what was supposed to have been your farewell show at the Hi-Pointe last spring. Was that really your last show?**

**Jeff:** Probably not.

**Dave:** At the time it was technically our last show.

**Tim H:** We basically broke up.

**Jeff:** What had happened was I had started my "career." I graduated college and I really didn't think that I would have that much time to dedicate to the band, so I told these guys that, you know,

we're not playing shows just because I can't make the practices.

**Tim H:** If Dionysus hadn't put us on a record, we would probably not be available and that's the bottom line.

**HIAMB: Were you guys basically going to throw in the towel and say, "screw it?"**

**Tim H:** Oh, no.

**Jeff:** Before we played our last show, Dave and I had talked. We had agreed that it (the "breakup") was going to be temporary, and that if I decided to move back to St. Louis with the rest of the band, we'd start playing again. I told him I would move back to St. Louis, but I didn't know when. And I finally was ready to commit and move back to St. Louis and that was the key.

**Dave:** Yep.

**Jeff:** And so we knew going into that last show that it wouldn't be the end, but it was just a matter of time.

**Tim H:** I mean, it could've been four months down the line, you know.

**Dave:** It could have been a couple of weeks.

**Jeff & Dave:** It could have been a year.

**HIAMB: What was it like before that?**

**Dave:** Well, there were two of us in Columbia and two of us in St. Louis. And the two of us in Columbia moved to St. Louis, and the two of us in St. Louis moved to Columbia. We could never figure out how to live in the same town at the same time!

**HIAMB: So, you all have a record deal with Dionysus. And I assume you're going to tour to push the release. What about management?**

**Tim H:** Well, we're basically our own management.

**HIAMB: So do you know where your next gig is after October 8th (release date for the LP/CD)?**

**Dave:** Sometime this fall we'll start having shows again to coincide with the release of the CD and we'll probably tour through the upper Midwest to start to get into the groove of touring. Play places like Iowa, Nebraska, Detroit, Chicago, Kansas City, Memphis...

**HIAMB: How did Dionysus pick up your record? What was your response when you got the news?**

**Tim H:** Tim Sullivan and Kopper worked behind the scenes in printing up and sending out press kits with our demo to a bunch of labels that Kopper had connections with through his radio show. A few seemed really interested but Lee Joseph at Dionysus was the first to say he really wanted to put it out as-is.

**Jeff:** When I found out I was in heaven.

**Tim H:** I don't think it's really going to hit me until I get the record in my hand.

**HIAMB: If you had a choice, what local band would you take on tour with you?**

**Tim H:** Probably Tomorrow's Caveman, just because we're all friends with them and...

**Dave:** No I wouldn't want to take Tomorrow's Caveman.

**Tim H:** Seriously? Well you go to tell them that!

**Dave:** When have you and Ray ever been together on the road and *not* gotten into a fight?

**Tim H:** Um, plenty of times! Every single tour we took out-of-state we didn't get into fights. Every single tour.

**Dave:** Not the stories I've heard!

**Tim H:** No, the stories of me turning around and taking punches at him? That's coming back from the bars and shit like that.

**Jeff:** I would take the Ded Bugs and that's about it.

**Tim S:** Ded Bugs. I can't think of any other band that we can actually play with on the road.

**Dave:** In the history of our band we've played with so many bands with different styles. We've played with surf bands, rockabilly bands, punk bands... it's just the nature of the beast.

**HIAMB: Describe your style.**

**Tim S:** It's rock'n'roll.

**Dave:** Well, everybody in the band's got their own specific influences whether it be punk or garage or strictly rock'n'roll, we don't even think about it, ya know? And I think that's why we've been around as long as we have, because the scene in Columbia was so fickle.

**Tim H:** It was definitely mixed up.

**Dave:** Yeah, I mean you might have a hundred people at the show and there's a mix of every kind.

**Tim H:** I couldn't believe the death metal crowd liked us. They did, they loved us!

**Dave:** Oh, hell yeah. We got in a battle of the bands with like 15 death metal bands and we came in second, I mean what the hell is that? [Laughs.]

**Jeff:** We all listen to so many different types of music, that when I sit down to write a song, I don't say, what is this going to be? Is it going to be rock? I don't think about it. I just start writing the song. It's a very natural process.

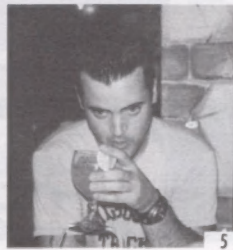
**Tim S:** You can't generalize our sound because we have so much diversity to our sound as it is.

**Dave:** Definitely a Midwest sound.

**HIAMB: Thanks for all the info, guys... Here it comes, clear a spot!** [At that moment, a giant platter of sizzling steak and pork fajitas enter the conversation and more drinks are ordered as the interview concludes.]

**More info:** Pick up The Crippleers debut CD/LP, *One More for the Bad Guys* on Dionysus Records at your local record store or on the Internet at [www.dionysusrecords.com](http://www.dionysusrecords.com). Visit the Crippleers' official web site at <http://hometown.aol.com/hopstock1/crippler.html>. But most importantly, don't miss them when they play your favorite music venue. They'll flat-out kick your ass, and that's a promise.

**¡VIVA LOS CRIPPLERS!**







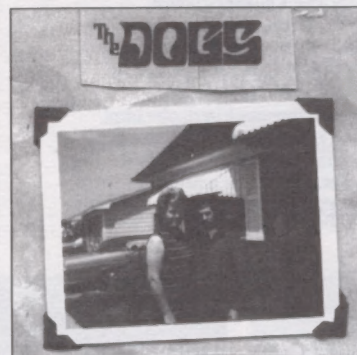
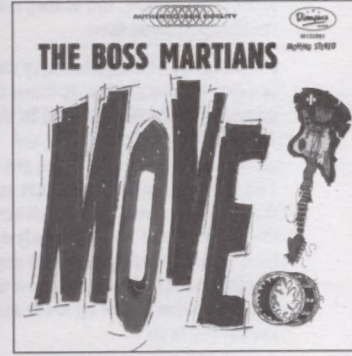
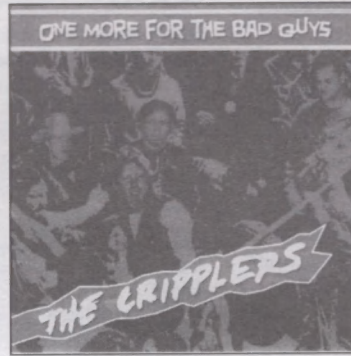
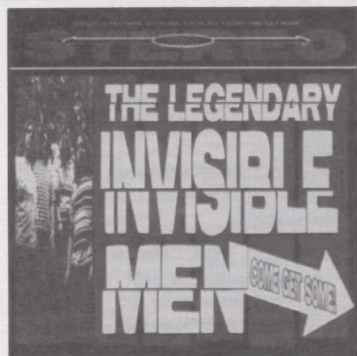
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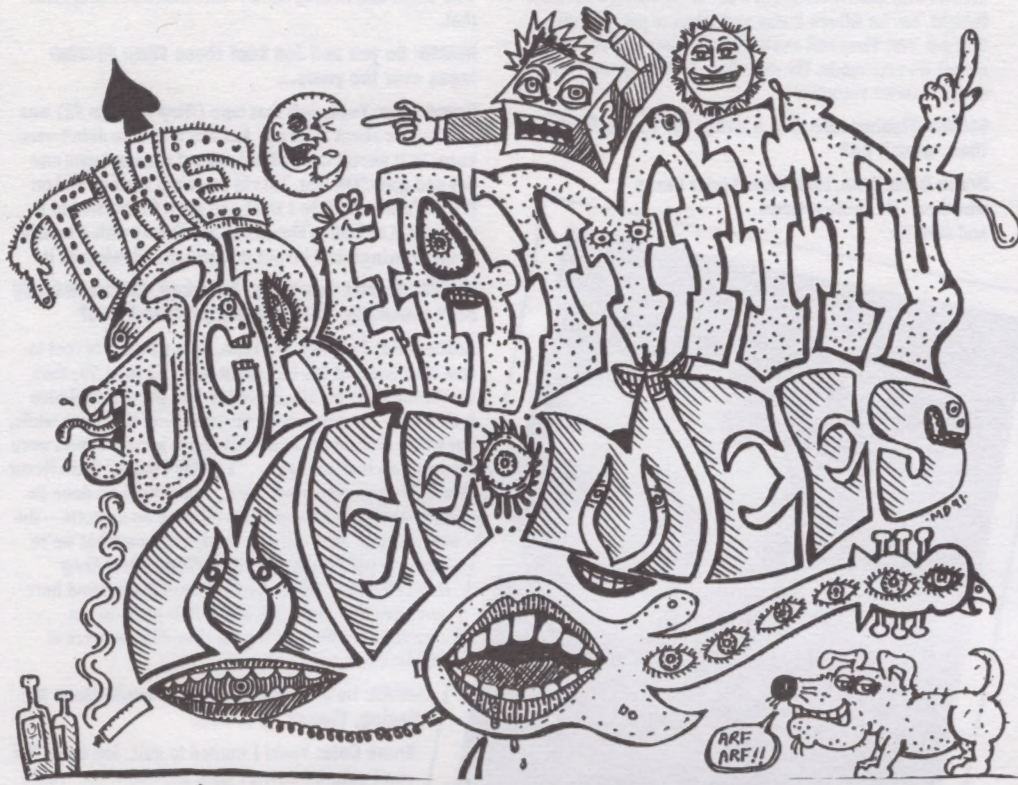


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This isn't the first time The Screamin' Mee-Mees have been featured in some obscure underground music rag. Not only has Randall Roberts written glowingly about their recordings and sang their praises in a couple of his columns in the *Riverfront Times*, but they've also been featured in such fanzines as Austin's *Whump!* #1 (from the winter of '95/'96), New Jersey's *200 Lb. Underground* #2 (1998) and Washington University's *Sample Magazine* #15 (spring/summer '97). As far as I can tell that's it. So now it's our turn. Aside from these few interviews and articles, they have been largely ignored, especially by any mainstream music publications. And it's not like they're that hard to figure out. They're just a couple of guys who get together once in a while and bang out some musical chaos, and they've been doing this off and on for more than thirty years!

People are often put-off by the most primal, simplistic musical weirdness out there. If it's not some next-big-thing virtuoso that they can hoist onto a pedestal and admire and hype just like everyone else, then it must not be worth writing about at all. Yeah, anyone can write about The Mooney Suzuki or The White Stripes. And don't get me wrong, I like those bands, too. It's just that there's so much more out there that is so overlooked and underappreciated that it's at times downright embarrassing! So what if the Mee-Mees made music that most people would call unintelligible noise? So what if it actually *is* unintelligible noise? Does that make them any less important in the grand scheme of rock 'n' roll? Well, yeah, probably (if rock'n'roll even has what you'd call a "grand scheme"). Sure, they never had a big college radio hit or an article written about them in *NME*, *Spin* or *Entertainment Weekly*. But I don't believe anyone reading these pages is really going to hold that against them!

Let's face it, the Mee-Mees are about as fucked up and obscure as ANY of your pet faves, if not more. OK, definitely more. But I think you get where I'm coming from here. And so what? Who needs to compare 'em to any other band? The Mee-Mees are, and always have been, on a completely separate plane of existence. No, Bruce Cole

and Jon Ashline might not be great musicians by any stretch of the imagination (and, believe me, that would be quite a stretch), but that doesn't mean they're not able to translate their vision onto wax (assuming they even have a musical "vision," of course), probably better than 99% of the rest of the crap out there. I guess if they had a vision it would be "Hey let's make some noise!" And well, that's exactly what you get! So they can deliver the goods as good as or better than any other fuckin' band around, in my humble opinion, hype or no hype. And they're from right here in River City! Homeys! Boys next door! The longhaired punks up the street that probably gave your parents' respectable suburban home a lawn-job and



terrorized the neighborhood with their crazy adolescent shenanigans while you were growing up, God love 'em.

The duo, who never played live together, have long kept a low profile amongst the local media and music scene. Yet they have amassed a sort of cult status amongst record collector geeks all around the world thanks to a few

scattered platters and the inclusion of one of their tracks ("Hot Sody") on a collection of obscure early punk rock called *Killed By Death* #3. Their inclusion on that one compilation probably helped catapult them more than anything into this "cult status" (which, incidentally, is rumored to include the likes of Thurston Moore, Mudhoney and Beck) despite the fact that their self-released (on their own Dog Face Records label) debut 7", *Live From the Basement*, was released back in 1977 and is itself quite a collector's item. Or that they followed that release with a succession of more singles and two phenomenal LPs in the 1990s. So just who are The Screamin' Mee-Mees, and what the hell were they all about, anyway? That is what I hope to uncover in this feature.

Bruce Cole (vocals, guitar, bass, and audio frequency generator) and Jon Ashline (vocals, drums, keyboard, Mongolian slide whistle, and 3-string classical guitar) first got together as young teenagers some 36 years ago in the middleclass St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Mo. They are truly one-of-a-kind. A duo that didn't give a shit if they knew how to play an instrument or write a song. They got together as kids and decided to literally bang out some noise, their sole intention being to make it sound as ridiculous and fucked up as they could. And thankfully, they recorded almost everything they ever played, preserved for us now to take and behold, this beautiful monstrosity of chaotic, psychotic noise that was The Screamin' Mee-Mees. And their legacy lives on even long after Jon has since gotten married and moved away to Topeka, Kansas to raise a family.

To describe the Mee-Mees brand of music is next to impossible. One really needs to hear it to believe it, and to try to understand it (good luck!). But, one does not need to understand it to form a high appreciation for it, which in and of itself is a good goddamn thing; otherwise 99% of us would be forever scratching our heads. No, all one needs to do is listen, and marvel at this splendid stupidity; this guttural noise that evokes the adjectives damaged, insane, and just fuckin' weird probably more than any other music I've ever heard (this, coming from a fan of everything from The Legendary Stardust Cowboy & Hasil Adkins to Happy Flowers & Mr. Quintron). Take it from me, their "music" ain't for everybody. Hell, much of it ain't even for me, but that doesn't mean I still don't think it's great. It is what it is, and I can respect that. They're not jumping on any bandwagon and they're certainly not copying somebody else's "art." You've gotta admit when you listen to this stuff that this is 100% Mee-Mees. There's no doubt in my mind that their two Warp Sessions discs are the ultimate in room clearing, annoy-the-neighbors fun, and the rest of their records aren't far behind.

Bruce Cole still lives in St. Louis, and he seems to be fairly happy and content, living in the very same house where all of this exquisite madness took some sort of freakish shape. I contacted Bruce, now 50, earlier in the summer with the idea of doing a feature on the Mee-Mees for this here mag, to try to tell their story as it's never been done before. He was very receptive to the idea, as long as I came armed with plenty of beer and cigarettes to hold him over until the next time he could get down to the store. I happily obliged.

*Interview took place in, of all places, Bruce's garage!*

**HIAMB: When exactly did you and Jon begin playing together?**

**Bruce Cole:** Yeah! Playing! [Laughs.] Bangin'! Bangin' on cardboard boxes playing Kinks and Yardbirds albums at 78 (RPM), and screamin' all sorts of stuff over 'em, fartin' in the mic, you name it! We started anywhere from about '65 to '68. When we started out we were only about 14 or 15 years old. Ashline lived two houses down the street.



**HIAMB: So you've lived in this same house here all your life?**

**Bruce Cole:** Heck no, I was married twice. But now I'm back, living here with my mother. Ya know, this is kind of a musical street I live on... a buddy up the street had a band back in high school, The Good Feelin'. Steve Scorfina, who later went on to be a guitar player in Pavlov's Dog, and was a founding member of REO Speedwagon! And a little bit further up the street lived Michael McDonald from the Doobie Brothers, who I never did like! Them two, Scorfina & McDonald, had a band together back in '65 called The Majestics. They grew up over here, right up Highmont. I made all the noise, Scorfina made half-assed noise, and McDonald played wimpy shit. So that's the way that worked.

**HIAMB: So what were you listening to back then in mid- to late-'60s when you and Jon were bangin' out all that crazy noise?**

**Bruce Cole:** Pretty Things, Stones, Downliners Sect, Newbeats...

**HIAMB: Now, where were you able to hear stuff like the Downliners Sect here in St. Louis?**

**Bruce Cole:** WLS out of Chicago! Used to listen to it all the time. They were playing them and The Pretty Things, The Kingsmen, Seeds, Music Machine, the Stones, you name it... all kinda stuff, back when KXOK (St. Louis) wouldn't touch 'em. All they (KXOK) played was crap.

**HIAMB: So, what was it like in the beginning then, did you actually own a guitar, or go out and get one?**

**Bruce Cole:** No, no... I didn't have anything like that 'til '68. Bought a bass. It was a piece of junk. I goofed around with it for a little bit and then let it collect dust. Until I moved to Kansas City in '71, going to electronics school—Electronic Theory. I traded that bass in Kansas City for a gut string acoustic. Then I knocked up this broad and I ended up getting married for six months! Then we split up and I came back home. Here comes Ashline and we're goofin' around, drivin' around and doing all kinda stupid stuff. We thought, "Let's do something." So, he was beatin' on coffee cans with a couple spoons. We'd graduated from cardboard boxes to coffee cans! And I played acoustic guitar. I learned a couple of chords in Kansas City, and I started figuring out other ones. We played all kinda garbage, Velvets and stuff like that. Then we started playing our own stuff. First song we ever did was called "My Mother Was a Coward." I still play it when I play somewhere. And my gut string—I figured I'd turn this thing into an electric. A guy up the street gave me a Silvertone head, and another guy gave me a 15" Vox speaker cabinet, and I wired 'em together. So I took this gut string, busted up a couple of those little transistor radios and cut the speakers out, wired 'em in parallel, took a hunk of mike chord, wired that on, plugged into the amp and I had a howlin' feedback machine! You can hear that on that (*Warp Sessions*) CD. By '72 I had a real electric guitar, which I just sold. I bought it for \$20 and sold it for a hundred bucks about a year ago. It was a Kustom Kraft—a hollow body electric with plastic pickups and it was sunburst green. It was weird lookin'. The only thing like it I ever saw in my life. And we just took it from there. We started getting into the German stuff, Kraut-rock, which I started hearing through Scott Fischer. Then I got my first issue of—I think it was *Jamz*—and they had ads in there and one was from Scott Fischer. He needed Seeds records to record. He couldn't find no Seeds records! The ad had his phone number and address in there so I called him up and we started talkin' and he came over. We were playing records for about four hours and he's goofin' around with the guitar—he didn't know how to do nothin'—and then the next week we went over to his house—he lived in Spanish Lake—and he had all this German stuff I'd never heard of, and he's playing this stuff and I'm like, "WOW!" Blew me away. Amon Düül and Ash Ra Tempel and all this crazy stuff... so I got heavy into that and that's what inspired this *Warp* stuff. Hawkwind, all that stuff. So we got together, me and Ashline and Fischer—he only played on these *Warp* things—all he's doin' is screamin' and beatin' on stuff. I'm playing guitar through the whole thing and those guys are taking turns on guitars and beatin' on stuff.

Around that time Ashline got a set of Woolworth's drums. Bought 'em for fifteen bucks and a bag of pot. [Laughs.] Still got 'em! They still work. Those drums are on every record we ever made. We recorded everything onto a little mono cassette recorder.

**HIAMB: Fischer also was a writer for *Creem* back then, wasn't he?**

**Bruce Cole:** Yeah, back when Lester Bangs was there. He wrote reviews and stuff for

'em. Them and *Rolling Stone*, and some other mags like that.

**HIAMB: So you and Jon kept those *Warp Session* tapes over the years...**

**Bruce Cole:** Yeah, well that tape (*Warp Sessions* #2) was missing for about 20 years. Jon had it and he didn't even know it! It wasn't marked. He started playing tapes one day and goes "Oh shit. This is the *Warp* stuff we did on Fischer's balcony!" So I went and got a CD burned of it and sent it to Eddie (Flowers/Slippy Town) with a bunch of my drawings, and he put it together and released it.

**HIAMB: So that was *Warp*, but when did you actually start recording as The Screamin' Mee-Mees?**

**Bruce Cole:** Probably '72. Yeah, I got a bunch of reel-to-reel stuff down in the basement from '72 thru '75, then we started to go strictly cassettes 'til I got this real nice reel-to-reel—a stereo one. We were doin' that for a while, our whole first album and most of our second album were recorded on that, and 45s... "Pull My Finger," "Life Never Stops," I forget the other ones... they were all done on reel-to-reel. The new one was all done on cassette—the new one that ain't out yet. We don't know what we're gonna do with it yet. It's called *Plastic Hong Kong Doorbell Finger*. Since Ashline don't live around here anymore that stuff took about four years to put together. He lives in Topeka now, flips burgers at McDonald's.

**HIAMB: He's obviously still got aspirations for playing, though, it seems.**

**Bruce Cole:** Yeah! I wanted to quit. Jon said, "We can't quit, we haven't gone anywhere yet." And I said, "I don't think we are going anywhere!" He says, "Who cares? It's fun!" So, I'm not quittin'. He talked me out of it.

**HIAMB: So you guys were just basically a basement band that got together to record shit onto a reel-to-reel and cassettes and**





that was it? Didn't you ever play out anywhere or anything?

**Bruce Cole:** Well, in '74 we did play out, once. That was up at coffee house at Flo Valley (community college). They had bands in there on Thursday nights, and a buddy of ours had a band that was playing up there and invited us up. So we went up there, and I forgot what we played, but, oh shit, it was terrible!! Ashline got so embarrassed during the first song that he stopped playing. He said, "I'm never playing live again," and he never did. There was some guy from the third band that was runnin' the mixing board and he purposefully made our two bands sound like shit and theirs sound good. We left while they were playing. We got out of there. But that was the first and last time Jon ever played out anywhere. I used to sit in on open mic nights and play Syd Barrett songs and Pink Floyd songs out at this place called Zonkers in Florissant. They had an open mic night and I always won five bucks and a draught, so that was alright. And I played up in Philadelphia three times at this Siltbreeze festival a few years ago. And Jacy Webster from Strapping Fieldhands got me a gig at this bar at a bowling alley with Bardo Pond. That was pretty neat. Tom Lax from Siltbreeze told me once that Thurston Moore was a big Mee-Mees fan, but I ain't never heard from him or nothin'.

**HIAMB:** I once read somewhere that the song "Answer Me" was written about someone that owes you money. That true?

**Bruce Cole:** Nope. I says to Ashline, "We gotta do a single for Brinkman." He goes, "What're we gonna call it?" I go, "I dunno." And he says, "Answer me!" So we called it "Answer Me!" and I started playing and he starts singin', just like that. It ain't about nothin'. Neither is the song on the other side, "Arthritis Today." He saw an ad somewhere that said "Arthritis Today" somethin' or other and boom! "Arthritis Today" became a song. Perfect b-side.

**HIAMB:** Did you know that "Hot Sody" was included on *Killed By Death Vol. 3*?

**Bruce Cole:** Yes. They never asked permission or nothin'. I heard it and it sounds like crap. You can hear all the scratches on it and everything! [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** So what was your first official release then, that was available to the public?

**Bruce Cole:** That would be the *Live From the Basement 7"* in '76. They screwed up on the date on the thing; it says '77 but it was recorded in '76. I told Jimmy at Bag of Hammers that and he still put '77 on it! And when the original version on Dog Face was printed they didn't print that stupid story on the back. They were supposed to but they didn't do it.

**HIAMB:** Who wrote that? Who is Horace Bimly?

**Bruce Cole:** Me! I'm Horace Bimly, Oral Sturgeon, Gold L. Aiglon and Miroslaw Fernandez.

**HIAMB:** Who is Mick Dillingham?

**Bruce Cole:** He's the guy that did our album covers. He disappeared years ago and I haven't been in touch with him at all. He lives over in England somewhere, chasin' girls and contributes stuff for *The Ptolemaic Terrascope*, which is a psychedelic rock 'n' roll music magazine. I met him over there around '91.

**HIAMB:** So until then all you had out was that original *Dog Face 7"*...

**Bruce Cole:** Yeah. Then I was over in England, and I brought over a tape with "Riotous Crowd" on it and played it for those *Terrascope* guys and they go, "Holy shit! Just two guys are doin' that?" And I said "Yeah, we recorded it in my basement." And they freaked out and encouraged us to do more and put an album out, so we did it. They loved it. Them and Bevis Frond... went over and saw all them guys. I went over just to visit. I knew 'em from trading records and writing letters and stuff. I was there two weeks and had a blast! I also turned those guys onto the Silver Apples, and they went nuts over them, too. So they put out a 45 and a couple of CDs. And I went and seen 'em and I was on the guest list. They knew who I was! There's a guy I was nervous to meet, Simeon! I told him I had his records since they came out and he goes, "Oh, so you're the guy that bought 'em!" [Laughs.] They were great. So I came back and Jon

and I finished that first album (*Clutching Hand Monster Mitt*). Then we started doing that string of 45s, put 'em all out on Dog Face, had 'em pressed right here in St. Louis. Two Dog Face records, that was it. And one cassette, *The Lost Elvis Tapes*, in '89, my solo cassette. Just me and a guitar, that's it. That's all that's on it. It even included a great cover of "Easy Livin'" by Uriah Heep. My friend Willie, some big shot at St. Louis Music, played it for Ken Hensley, the guy that wrote it, and Willie said the guy was on the floor laughing so hard his back hurt! I believe it! [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** What were you guys doing between the time you recorded the *Live From the Basement 7"* and the *Monster Mitt* LP? Besides your solo cassette, did you ever get together during that span of about 15 years?

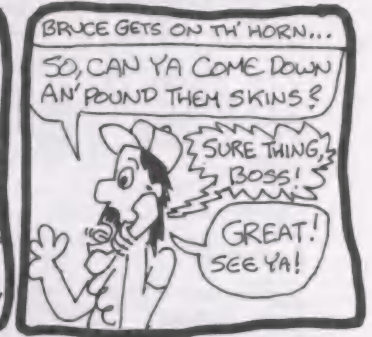
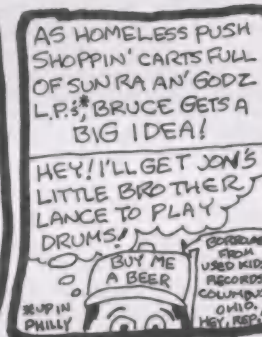
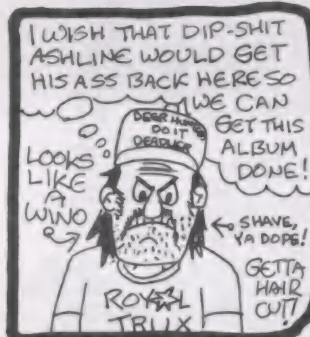
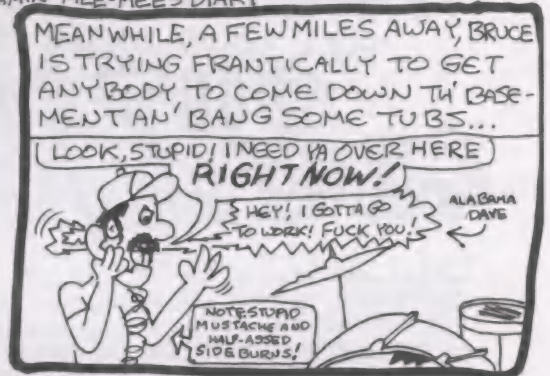
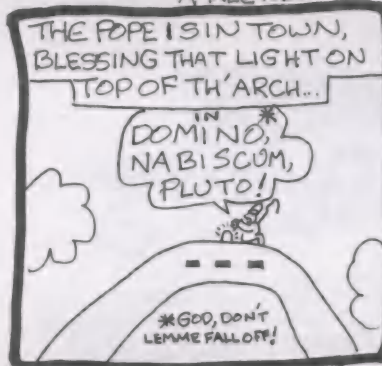
**Bruce Cole:** Well, Jon got married and I got married again. That lasted two years, had another kid. He came over to my house a couple of times and did stuff but we didn't record. Oh, in 1980 we did somethin' but it never came out. It's called "Breathin' Bag." I still got the tape around here somewhere...

**HIAMB:** What other music did you listen to over the years that helped influence the Mee-Mees sound?

**Bruce Cole:** Oh, the Butthole Surfers, Black Flag, Stooges... I was into all that stuff. Still am. Well, take a look here—here's a bunch of stuff that I like—Antiseen, XTC, Gibson Bros., Can, Jackofficers, James Brown...

# ANOTHER MESS

A TALE FROM TH' SCREAMIN' MEE-MEES DIARY



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**HIAMB:** So if you were to meet someone who wasn't familiar with the band, how would you describe your music to them?

**Bruce Cole:** A bunch of noise! [Laughs.] That's all ya can say! That's all it was... A bunch of noise made by a couple of guys that don't know how to play nothin'.

**HIAMB:** What ever happened to Jerry M. Balmer?

**Bruce Cole:** Jerry M. Balmer is legally blind. I haven't seen him in about five years. I talk to him—haven't seen him. He's never seen me. [Laughs.] He played bass on one cut, on "Mysterious Gestures," on the second album. He had a band called The Skylarks, he might still have it. They were just a bar band, played a buncha crap. Dirt Wheeler also played with us, from Kid Sister, they were an old St. Louis band back in the punk rock days, or before rather. He played on our first record, he plays on one song on the second album, and he's on two cuts on the one that's comin'. I see him about once a year. He comes over, I've got some stuff ready and he plugs his bass into the mixer and he just puts it on.

**HIAMB:** So what keeps you busy these days? Do you still play regularly? Do you have any buddies that come over and jam with you or anything?

**Bruce Cole:** Nah, nobody'll play with me. Just Ashline. I don't have any friends. I don't have any anymore. Just Jon, when he's here. Maybe three times a year, then he leaves, and then I go inside and watch sports.

**HIAMB:** So what else did you guys do back then in the early days, ya know, for kicks?

**Bruce Cole:** Ashline was the only guy in the world that had a cassette player in the car at that time, this was back in '70 or '71. It recorded, too! He had a '69 Javelin. We'd go to White Castle and sit in the parking lot playing that

shit as loud as we could, man. We'd have people honkin' at us and guys threatening to kick our ass if we didn't shut it off. That's how we tested it! If nobody liked it, we knew it was good! [Laughs.] We still do it like that! We were both nuts. One time we found a bowling ball down in the creek and we brought it up here and we were rollin' it around in the street. Larry, this guy that lived across the street who would play with us, too, sometimes—he wasn't no Mee-Mee, though—he took that thing, wound it up a couple times over his head and let it go flying and it went down the street and crashed right into this guy's garage door and broke it. Broke the garage door. Then one night me, Ashline and Larry were sittin' on my front porch and this old '56 Ford came rolling really slow down the street and it was leavin' a trail of somethin'. I go "Is that gas or water?" And Larry goes, "Let's find out." And he goes out and throws a match on and ZOOM! Down the street go the flames, man. It was dark out and we took off runnin' in all different directions and I took off into the backyard and I guess he did, too, from the other direction, and then BLAM! We ran right into each other. Almost knocked me out. We came close to knockin' each other out. Anyway, we didn't hear nothin' blow up so I guess it was okay. One time Ashline, me and this other guy, Mike, caused a car wreck up on Hartnett. It was Halloween and we were out goofin' around. I was 15. Bottom of the hill there are two telephone polls across the street from each other. We stole a garden hose off the side of a house and tied each end to a poll, and had it stretched across the street. Then we went and hid behind some trashcans. Sure as shit here comes a car and BOOM! Hits the hose, and it must've been a strong hose cuz it knocked the windshield in, and they slammed on the breaks and slid sideways. Meanwhile there's this other car comin' in the other direction and they can't stop in time cuz the streets are wet cuz it's



been drizzling and BAM! Broad-sided that other car. We took off runnin'. I never ran so fast in my life! And that was the end of Halloween. We did so much fuckin' stupid shit...

**HIAMB:** So how did you know Mike Rep of the Quotas?

**Bruce Cole:** I met him the second time I was in Philly and we became pals. And we started trading records and tapes and stuff. I haven't heard from him in a few years. I tried getting a hold of him today but the record store he works at had a fire and they're not gonna be open until August. Used Kids Records in Columbus, Ohio.

**HIAMB:** Yeah, I heard about that fire! That was terrible.

**Bruce Cole:** Yeah, he works there with Dan Dow of the Gibson Bros. Dan Dow owns it.

**HIAMB:** So Mike Rep had a hand in producing *Nude Invisible Foot Phenomenon*?

**Bruce Cole:** He played with the tapes. Mastered 'em. Ran 'em through the mixer and adjusted the levels and stuff. That was everything that went on that album. Now, the first album was a mess. We were too excited to get that thing out. That was mastered and pressed out at Premier down on Locust Street in St. Louis. After that record they went out of business! We put companies out of business! Bag of Hammers, Premier... [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** How did you get hooked up with Eddie Flowers from Slippy Town?

**Bruce Cole:** Oh, I used to buy Gizmos records back when he was in the band. They put out their Gizmos records and we put out ours around the same time, and I liked The Gizmos so I sent 'em a record. And he wrote me back, "What are you sending me this crap for? Sounds like shit ... but it still sounds pretty cool." Then I never heard from him for years until we had a few more records out. Then I get a letter from him and he wanted to know "Are you the same guys that put out that *Live From the Basement* thing? I got some of your new stuff and it's great and blah blah blah..." So I wrote back and we kept in touch and have been trading tapes and shit ever since. Now he's putting out the *Warp Sessions*!

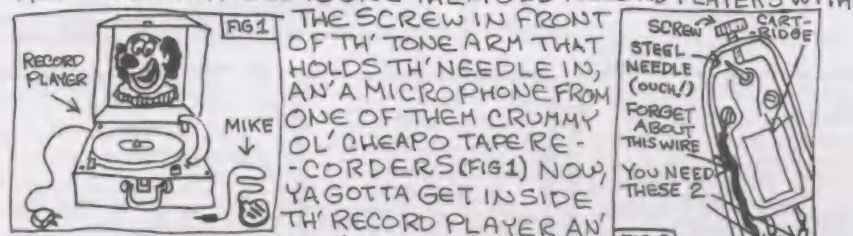
**HIAMB:** Any plans on releasing more stuff? When can we expect to see some new Mee-Mees material?

**Bruce Cole:** Well, I want to put out a CD with all of the songs from our 45s and compilation tracks. It's going to be called *Music for No Occasion*. I don't know when it's gonna be out. No idea... I also have a CD ready to go that I recorded with Jon's brother, Lance Ashline, in 1986 that's called *Not a Sonata*, 17 songs. Hopefully Eddie's gonna put that out, too. We'll see...

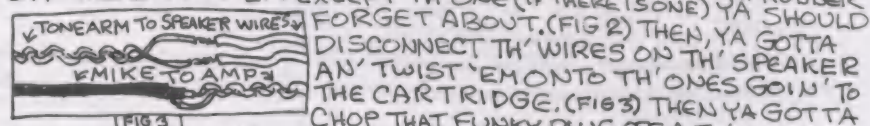
Bruce no longer has the Post Office box for the band, and he doesn't have a computer yet so ya can't e-mail him, but if you'd like to write, I'm sure he'd love to hear from you. Hell, he'd love to hear from anybody, especially anyone in St. Louis who'd like to go fishing, take in a Cards game once in a while, or to even get together and jam! Just send him a letter to his home address at 1239 Highmont, Ferguson, MO 63135. To order copies of the two new *Warp Sessions* discs, write to Eddie Flowers, PO Box 7034, Van Nuys, CA 91409 or e-mail [slippytown@earthlink.net](mailto:slippytown@earthlink.net) ([www.slippytown.com](http://www.slippytown.com)).

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CORD AN' CUT TH' RUBBER OFF SO YA GOT TH' SHEILD AN' TH' WIRE IN TH' MIDDLE WITHOUT LETTIN' 'EM TOUCH EACH OTHER. NOW, TWIST TH' MIKE WIRES TO TH' OTHER HALF OF TONE ARM WIRE THAT GOES TO TH' AMP (FIG 3) AN' YER ALL SET! NOW, TURN TH' VOLUME KNOB UP ONLY HALF WAY 'CAUSE YA MIGHT BLOW OUT TH' CARTRIDGE, AN' TH' TONE KNOB (IF YA GOT ONE) ALL TH' WAY UP. SET TH' NEEDLE IN TH' START OF TH' OUT GROOVE AN' START TALKIN'. YER GONNA BE AMAZED AN' SO WILL YR PALS WHEN YA SAY GOOFY STUFF ON TH' OUT GROOVES OF RECORDS YA BORROWED OFF 'EM! WOW!

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Bruce  
KING OF FUN!

P.S. 12 INCHERS GOT LOTS A OUT GROOVE TO PLAY WITH!





## Screamin' Mee-Mees Discography:

Live From the Basement 7"

(Dog Face Records, 1977/reissued on Bag of Hammers, 1996)

"Hot Sody" was included on Killed By Death Vol. 3

(Redrum, 1989)

Clutching Hand Monster Mitt LP

(Dog Face Records, 1992)

"Pull My Finger" b/w "Family Tree" 7"

(Electric Records, 1992)

"Life Never Stops" b/w "Oscillations"

(Dog Meat Records, 1994)

Home Movies 7"

(Bag of Hammers Records, 1996)

Nude Invisible Foot Phenomenon LP

(Bag of Hammers, 1996)

"Cartoonland" on a tribute to The Twinkeyz split 7" with Mike Rep & The Quotas

(New World of Sound Records, 1996)

"Squawk Squawk Squawk" on a compilation double 7" EP that came out in Whump #1 (fanzine, 1996)

"Answer Me" b/w "Arthritis Today" 7"

(Brinkman Records, 1996)

The Screamin' Mee-Mees & Hot Scott Fischer — Warp Sessions 1973 CDR

(Slippy Town, 2001)

The Screamin' Mee-Mees & Hot Scott Fischer — You're Now in Our World: Warp Sessions 1972 CDR

(Slippy Town, 2001)

## Bruce Cole solo releases:

The Lost Elvis Tapes Cassette

(Dog Face, 1989)

Venusian Plateaus 7"

(Bobby J. Records, 1996)

"I first heard of the Screamin Mee-Mees from reading an old copy of *Forced Exposure*. It was a rave review of their freakazoid masterpiece, *Clutching Hand Monster Mitt*, and though the review was pretty short, it mentioned that they were from St. Louis and had been releasing their music since the mid-'70s. Being a St. Louis garage nut at the time, I checked the phone book, tracked down drummer Jon Ashline's number, and he lead me to Bruce Cole. Bruce got me a copy of the record, and what I heard on it was so far gone, so way out there in the world of rock, so spontaneous and celebratory—and stupid as hell—that I started pestering them for a few songs to release on my own label. It was easy. They said yes. Most of my friends were baffled by the record; they didn't hate it, they didn't love it. They just didn't understand it. Neither did I, but I was sick of records that I understood, and that's the beauty of The Screamin' Mee Mees' music: it transcends comprehension. It's stupid, it's joyous, it's loud as fuck and it comes from that place inside the brain that's pure and primal." —Randall Roberts (Electric Records)



Bruce Cole and Jon Ashline, circa 1977.



# CHEAP REWARDS

BY JASON RERUN

**OK,** chubby kids (yeah, that's right. I know if you're reading some kinda Punk Rock record nerd column you gotta be chubby. It goes without saying, so pull up those jeans hanging way off yer ass and press on...) When we met last time, we were talking about the history of Punk/Wave in the St. Louis metro area. First and foremost, I need to thank Matt Hornish for kindly giving me his spare copy of The Clones flexi disc. (I couldn't even come up with the name of the band last time). A true saint and spreader of the word! (The Punk Rock and New Wave word that is!) Thanks Matt! To complete the last article... The Clones flexi was self-released. Two tracks on a one-sided 8" black flexi with the paper sleeve glued to the simple cover art. No information is listed on it besides a phone number! One track is good quirky New Wavey pop, the other track is so-so. A cool release, but don't kill yourself looking for it. (Again, unless you're an obsessed goofball like me.)

This time, we'll go a bit different route. Instead of telling you about records that may take you years to hunt down (don't worry—plenty of that to come in future issues), this will be the first part of a "listener's guide" to the world of the *Killed By Death* compilation series. For the uninitiated (or those few punk fans that have been under a rock for the last ten or so years) the *Killed By Death* comps are a series of bootlegs with tracks from long out of print, obscure 7"s from the heyday of Punk Rock. ('77-'82) Since the series started in 1989, at least a dozen or so different people have released volumes under the *Killed By Death* moniker. (OK, from this point on, I'll just type KBD, as I'm tired of typing it out.) The numbering sequence for volumes has basically no rhyme or reason (obviously, because so many people put out volumes). I've decided to rate the volumes according to the quality of the music, rather than the rarity of the records being comped or other such nonsense. Many volumes seem to include certain songs for their rarity rather than the quality of the actual music. KBD has introduced many long forgotten records to new kids, but at the same time drove up the price of the original records as well. Many of the singles on KBD volumes used to clutter the 50 cent bins at most used record stores. Too many record sellers (eBay is by far the worst, shameless example of this) use the term "Killed By Death" to describe any punk looking record pre-1985, making it impossible to luck out and find a bargain on any of the "KBD" comped records. Of course, this is my opinion, and let it be known that I am not a KBD Punk-only SNOB! OK, kids grab a number two pencil...

Naturally, you need to start with the first four volumes. KBD #1, #2, #3, #4... These are the original, and only volumes (to the best of my knowledge, yer honor) done by the original people. Supposedly released by someone in Sweden, but I've heard supposed "confirmed rumors" of involvement from an Australian guy and a U.S. source. An obviously fake label called Redrum Records with an address of Hell, Norway and a two-color cover and some half-assed, tongue-in-cheek liner notes. The geniuses behind the 1st four created a lot more than they could have hoped for. It took a couple years, and more (bootleg of the bootleggers!) pressings to convince a fanatical following. The first four are essential listening for even the casual punk listener. Some of the absolute classics of the more "obscure" oddballs of PUNK got the treatment. The Zero Boys, Rotters, Eat, Freestone, "Bummer Bitch," etc. etc. etc. Only about two dumpy tracks in the bunch. These have been bootlegged a million times now and should be easy to find. No more explanation, just buy 'em already.

In the next ring, we have the Grade "A" large free range eggs of the lot. KBD #8?, #9, #10, #12... These are my next, "later" volumes I think are pretty much solid thru and thru. #8? has a few real classics like The Stiphnoyds' "Mom's A Fake" and Vast Majority's "I Wanna Be A Number" (which has a great story behind it itself). #9 and #10 pretty much just flat-out fucking RULE!! These two are really flexing the "Hey look at my record collection!" track list and collector nerd jerk-off liner notes to boot. (nice pun, eh?) But, I'll certainly admit they have great taste. X-X's "You're Full of Shit" is classic. These two volumes will not leave your head for days. Normals "Almost Ready," Vains "School Jerks," Jetsons "Suicidal Tendencies," etc. etc. etc. White hot shit here, folks! These seem to have the biggest "creepy record collector" releases on them. Like Tapeworm, Vomit Pigs, Gentlemen of Horror, etc. Records pressed in the 200-300 range and trade hands for \$300+, usually lots more. Somebody's showing off, but so what, cost me \$10! #12 is very solid as well. Lots of classics like The Lubricants from Milwaukee and Peer Pressure's accidental punk track "Sounds of the '80s."

Moving right along to the "still very much worth yer allowance" group... KBD #7, #17, #200. #7 is worth it for The Moids "Back to Bataan" alone! A few other solid punkers by The Cigarettes, Village Pistols, Last Kids, etc. round it

out, but I'm still not sold on Tampax or the greatness of that DDT song! (DDT is a prime example of over hyping certain KBD records.) #17 may be a bit tough to find these days. Haven't seen it recently, but worth hunting down at a reasonable price. This is a cool volume, because it has many B-sides and other tracks from 7"s that were previously comped. This has Belleville, IL's Max Load with "X Rod". Mad, Mentally Ill, Normals, Moids, etc. Pretty solid. In a way later volume, (at least in numbering, but released around 1997) #200. It's an all French volume! Very surprised by the high quality of obscure French punk. I knew the killers like Gasoline, Starshooter and 84 Fleth, but didn't imagine the quality of bands with (mostly) cruddy names like Bulldozer, Factory and Ox. Oh, well. Great upbeat volume. Nice theme on this one and #201 in the next group...

OK, then, buy 'em if yer looking for something to buy because they're still at least 65% good. KBD #5, #6, #201, #1 (The 2nd #1, with The Atoms sleeve on the cover...), #13, #77. OK, #5 & #6 are pretty good. These came out about 4 years after the first four and disappeared right away (I-4 came out around 1989, by the way). They have since been repressed and seem to be around quite a bit. They were done by the same guys... let's see. A few killers like Nubs "Job" (They you may know from the New Bomb Turks cover of it), Cracked Actor "Nazi School," Next "Monotony," and a few others. My only complaint with these is the hardcore tracks by Japan's G.I.S.M. and The Stalin. (The Stalin is one of my favorite Japanese bands, but they belong on a hardcore compilation me thinks!) These two volumes have some artpunk stuff on 'em as well. Great stuff, but doesn't flow that well with some of the other tracks. #201 is done by the same people as the all-French punk of #200. Nice full color cover like the French one. Just not as many great tracks. Still pretty solid, but a couple clunkers. The (second) #1 is decent as well. At least 65% good... The people who put this out thought they'd be annoying and number their volume #1 as well! All UK punk. Some of it's on the weak side, but has a few standouts. #77 is nice because it has 8 full non-US EPs in their entirety. With the sleeves crudely reproduced on the cover, but it's always nice to have the complete records! Wish more were like this!! And last, but not least, #13. This was put out by Tim Yohanan of *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll* fame. Great idea that I wish somebody else would take a stab at. This volume has all songs that never made it to vinyl. Pretty much all tracks are off of demos, practice tapes, and live recordings. Of course, it's a bit lo-fi, but is well worth it for those of us who always wondered what those bands you could only read about sounded like.

Moving into the buy it to complete the collection, otherwise tape yer friend's copy because there are still some good songs, but much more filler realm of KBD #14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 40, 41, 007, 999, 1234. I will say that I am a pretty shameless die-hard Punk Rock fan and have listened to each of these volumes several times, but not near the wear 'em out plays of the above installments. It's just that you should buy these if you see 'em, but after you have memorized the above-mentioned. Clear? #14 has a few great tracks by Vom, Starshooter, Feederz... but also tries to be cute by throwing in a couple FAKE bands. (Not as in "fake punk," where rock bands of the '70s tried to cash in on what was perceived as the new musical fad at the time, but truly made up bands; guys fuckin' around making up records with new recordings mixed in sleaze ball move.) OK, #20 has, again, a few great tracks, but is mainly Rock/Punk with a few "fake punk" '70s tunes. Good for a laugh in parts, but not essential. #22 has a great looking cover! One of my favorite of the series actually. Full color, with brief liners. Mostly worldwide punk ranging from noisy D.I.Y. punk grunt to early Eurohardcore to inept '70s Japanese punk. Decent, but can't always judge a book by its cover. #24—Kinda think the same people who did #20 did this one. Not positive. Again, a few good tracks by Warm Gun and The Gizmos, but lots of it is fairly weak Rock Punk. #26 is the all-Canadian volume that came out way before the series reached this high in the #s. Anyway, musically, this is really great! Solid Punk Rock... but I have to downgrade it because many of its tracks were already available on the great (and legitimate, which means easier to find) reissue CDs released by Other People's Music in Canada! Buy those instead, and

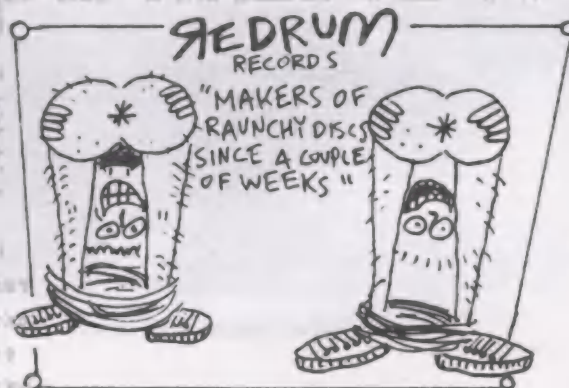
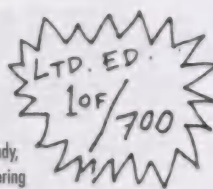
get this only if you need the couple other tracks that don't sound near as good as those reissue CDs. Get my point? #40 and #41 boast "Strictly No English or American Junk." Fine and dandy, but the crappy pressings and quiet mastering job doesn't help the so-so song selection on these two. A few standouts, but nothing to write home about. #007—I actually like this volume quite a bit, but for the non-insane fan, it falls flat overall for the "Fake Punk" and Rock disguised as punk flavors on it. #999 has bad graphics, and shoddy computer layout, and only a slightly better song selection. The Now, Saucers and Iowa's Dogs are the hits, but this falls a bit limp overall. #1234 appears to be the same people who did #999. Some style of crappy computer-produced cover layout and about the same type of song selection. Has a few humorous tracks by "fake punk" bands, and all out stupidity in the classic Low Numbers "Shok Treatments" (even with a Punk spelling!), but otherwise is pretty weak. Most of the original singles on this one still pop up for a few bucks each if you look hard enough.

Now, the dregs of it all... The "may as well flush yer cash down the toilet" volumes. KBD #11, #16, #33. OK, here's the poop on these. #11 is completely fake! The bands, songs, records, liner notes, etc. are all 100% horseshit! Actually, a pretty clever joke. Duped lots of people, including me who orders pretty much any KBD volume blindly. This has faux bands like The Curly Fries, Frothy Shakes, Sexy Fits, Orgy Poppers, Baby Rattlers, etc. All are in fact the so-so Hardcore band Fat Day from Boston, with a costly practical joke. #16 was put out by Mike Lucas of The Phantom Surfers and Repent Records fame. It has a few bands that Mike was in as a young lad. All the sounds on it were actually recorded in 1977 & 1978 (at least it sure sounds like it!). Just a self-indulgent waste of money, I guess. (Although I know of more than a few people; again I plead guilty, that ordered this one blindly just like #11.) #33 is a hands-down shitty record. Has a folded over photocopied LP cover (yes, just regular copy paper!), shitty pressing, shitty mastering and fuckin' shitty song selection. Not even the decent O-Level or Victim (who are a good band, and they managed to pick one of their weakest songs. Dipshits!) track can save this sorry piece. Overpriced import as well!

The only volumes that I know for sure exist (because I saw 'em) that I couldn't rate 'cuz I don't gots 'em: KBD #15.5, 18, 100, FU2. Oh, well. I'll find copies eventually. Let me know if you think I'm way off on this article. Next issue will be a guide of sorts to (some of) the *Bloodstains* series, as well as other one-off bootleg compilations. Feel free to send suggestions about future articles. Better yet, write one and submit it yourself.

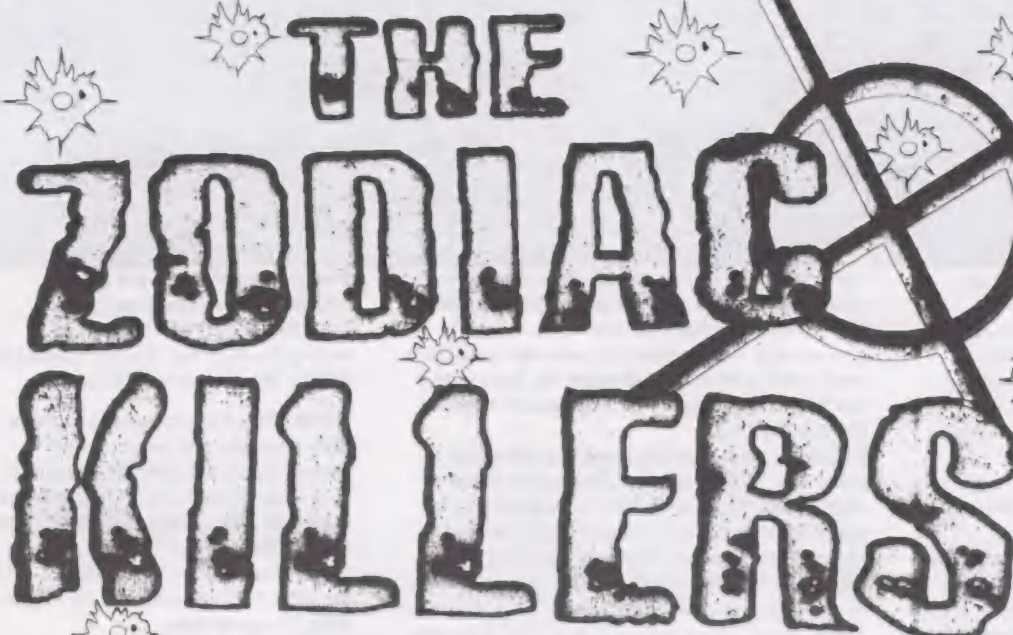
The best part... ENDNOTES:

1. Still need a picture sleeve for my Max Load 7". Help me!
2. Always still open to purchase unwanted, excess, dust-collecting, heavy-as-shit, don't-wanna-move-those-fuckin'-things-again Punk, New Wave, Power Pop, Garage, etc. records, fanzines, pins, etc. (Mainly interested in late '70s/early '80s stuff, but send all lists!)
3. Will gladly trade CDs of rare Punk, etc. 7"s, LPs, comps, etc. (Not just regular in-print stuff, though.)
4. Help butt, send monkeys. Now!
5. Buy stuff from [www.dove-hill.org](http://www.dove-hill.org). Better fuckin' do it.
6. Listen to Gift Wrapped Crap, Scott Bass' internet radio show with tons of great old Punk rock. Check it out [www.antennaradio.com](http://www.antennaradio.com)
7. Get Bent.





# THE ZODIAC KILLERS



**The Zodiac Killers are the real thing. They are punk.** *Do you remember what that is? Or*

**Interview By:**  
**Kopper & Bill Streeter**

**Photos:**  
**Kopper and**  
**The Zodiac Killers**

*are you too busy listening to watered down horseshit, that sucks, but is hyped as punk rock? You know what punk rock is... So do The Zodiac Killers. Featuring Greg Lowery of Supercharger, The Rip Offs, and The Infections, once you see and hear The Zodiac Killers you will be a believer. The Zodiac Killers have been around in one form or another since February of 1999 and have two albums under their belts already on Greg's Rip Off Records label (reviewers routinely called The Most Thrilling Experience one of the best punk albums of 1999). Their latest, Have a Blast, came out in February 2001 and was reviewed in the last issue of HIAMB. The Zodiac Killers entertained St. Louis with a blistering set of loud, fast, stupid punk rock at the Creepy Crawl on Wednesday July 18th. Guitarist Jill Haley lived in St. Louis for a while and her family is still here. I got in touch with Greg and Jill before they left for the road and arranged to interview them while they were in town, and they happily obliged. Interview took place in the kitchen at Jill's parents' house in Sunset Hills, by Kopper and Bill. Present were Greg Lowery (bass/vocals), Jill Haley (rhythm guitar/vocals), Jeremy Tuman (lead guitar/vocals), and Billy Badass (drums).*

**HIAMB: So how many fake poseurs have you guys killed at your shows?**

**Billy:** Fake poseurs are too cool to come see our shows.

**Greg:** Yeah, we don't get to see 'em too often. They're waiting for the other bands.

**Billy:** Either that or we're totally outnumbered.

**Greg:** They're waiting for fuckin' American Heartbreak or AC/D-She or some shit like that.

**HIAMB: Is the Creepy Crawl allowing you to have all of your bombs and trigger mechanisms installed before the show tonight?**

**Greg:** Oh yeah, well, they don't know about that yet...

**Jeremy:** They don't know, and what they don't know will destroy the club.

**HIAMB: Will the other bands playing be able to benefit from these as well?**

**Greg:** The other bands might be the fake poseurs! [Laughs.] If everyone has a fuckin' ponytail we're outta here!!

**Jeremy:** We don't know any of these bands or anything, or what's in store.

**HIAMB: We think you'll like The Adult Toys, and The Spiders. So... Jill, you're originally from St. Louis, right? Why'd you leave?**

**Jill:** Well, I'm not quite originally from here. My family moved here when I was thirteen. And why'd I leave? Because... I dunno, I wanted to move to California. I was actually born there and I used to go out there every summer and the music scene was ripping out there back in the '80s. It's not so great now...

**Jeremy:** We always thought it was cuz of your slutty reputation around here. [Laughs.]

**Jill:** Yeah, I kinda left behind a trail of broken hearts, too.

**HIAMB: So you were in a band before called Wett?**

**Jill:** Yeah, with two "t"s.

**Greg:** Yeah, t-t, like tit-ie, get it? Wet-tittie. [Laughs.]

**HIAMB: So how did you end up meeting up with these guys? Were you familiar with any of Greg's other bands or Rip Off Records before?**

**Jill:** I wasn't that familiar with him or his label. He said I was stuck in the Mission punk scene in San Francisco.

**Greg:** Skateboarders, guys that never bathe...

**Jill:** Michelle, our bass player, moved to the East Coast, and we were trying to find a new bass player so I decided to go on the Internet on SanFranciscoMusic.com and he had an ad in there, of all things. Actually they all had an ad in there with each of their names on it. All three of 'em had an ad cuz I answered all three of 'em!





**Jeremy:** [Laughing] I don't even own a computer so that's not possible...

**Jill:** He [Billy] said the first thing they wanted was a female guitar player and I was really leery of that...

**Greg:** Cuz we put underneath it "one that gives good head," and she fuckin' called right up! [Laughs.]

**Jill:** So my first question was "Why do you want a female guitar player?"

**Billy:** I didn't know why...

**Jill:** He came up with some very intelligent answer at the time, though.

**Billy:** Yeah, I made up some shit to make it sound like it wasn't creepy. I was just coverin'...

**Greg:** [interrupting, to Billy] So you were talkin'... See, I still don't get it! I thought she was just like delusional or on drugs or something. So you actually did have an ad or something and she responded to your ad?

**Jill:** You had one, too!

**Greg:** [Getting more aggravated] I know I did; that's how I got ya! That's where we got it, so now we're arguing about this... Anyway, fuck it—we'll talk about it later.

**Jeremy:** Basically she was the best lookin' one that showed up that day.

**HIAMB (Bill):** So you were really looking for a female musician?

**Greg:** Yeah, well, to let ya know the history of the band I originally had another lineup and these guys were just fuckin' freaks beyond control and it was a miracle I was able to put an album out with them. So it took six months to get the album done, and after that it was over with. But they were all fuckin' completely insane. So basically the band disintegrated but I wanted to keep it going, ya know. I said fuck it! I'm sick of changing band names every time these freaks decide they wanna quit or do something different. So I wanted to just keep the same idea and keep it going. Ya know, I don't need 'em anyway. Get three other people and fuckin' have a great time. And that's what we're doing. This is the real Zodiac Killers. The first band was just, like, me trying to keep these idiots together.

**Billy:** [Scratching his head] Wait... there's another album? [Laughs.]

**Greg:** It was a practice album. So it had this real bitch Jami Wolf from Man's Ruin, and li'l psycho Ross, who was in The Brides. But that lineup barely lasted six months.

**HIAMB (Bill):** So you had a female musician in that band and you just wanted to keep the same gender roles then in the band...

**Greg:** Exactly. Well, she wasn't really a female. She actually dropped her pants every now and then. She was a dude. Anyway, actually, to be honest with you, I like female vocals and I also think that, the kind of music that I was trying to play—faster punk rock—it would help us set the aggressiveness of it. Cuz everyone likes catchy music and I do, too. I was just trying to do it as fast as I could, almost a la New Bomb Turks, and make it catchy. And so I thought a female vocalist would help make it not so testosterone-driven, ya know? So that's why I did that. And I'm happy to have Jill, even though I hate her. No, just kiddin'. [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** We're already pretty familiar with Greg's previous bands, but what about the rest of you? What sort of punk rock pedigrees did you guys bring to the band?

**Jeremy:** I played in a lot of bands, really, first in Tuscaloosa, where I'm from, and in New York City for

a few years. None of 'em ever really did a whole lot or released anything. My last band in New York was Killer & The Kids and when that band broke up a couple of the guys moved to San Francisco and I went with them. That's how I ended up there. And that was in '98. That's when I met Billy, also, cuz I played with his brother in that band (Killer & The Kids).

**Billy:** Here's what happened: I work at a club in San Francisco in the booking office. I'm the night manager. I started booking these two dollar punk rock shows on off-nights for bands that just felt like playing for beers or whatever. So I knew that Jeremy had joined The Zodiac Killers, and I got in touch with him and I was trying to get them to play on one of the bills. So I was holding a date for 'em to play and I called him and he said, "Well, I got some good news and some bad news. The bad news is we're not really playing any shows right now, but the good news is we're kinda lookin' for a drummer." And he had seen me play. I was in a band there called The Badasstards.

**Jeremy:** I knew he was a good drummer. This was after the original Zodiac Killers drummer had quit or had been kicked out or whatever the hell happened to him, so I nominated Billy for drums and brought him in. Christian, who I'd played in Killer & The Kids with, came out to California to



The thing is, I'm not here to make everyone my fuckin' friend. I'm here to have fun.

join The Badasstards and he was doing that for a while, but they'd split up so I knew Billy wasn't doing anything...

**Billy:** The Badasstards being my San Francisco history. I was in a bunch of other bands in Washington, DC and Maryland.

**HIAMB:** How old are all you guys?

**Jill:** Old. We're all aging punk rockers.

**Greg:** You can't ask that! C'mon...

**Jeremy:** Too old be doin' this stupid bullshit that's for sure!

**Jill:** I'm 35 and proud of it, I'll say.

**HIAMB:** Well, I just turned 36 yesterday, so...

**Greg:** Good man, then you're our age!

**Jeremy:** I'm the little baby clocking in at 29. I'm allowed to be in punk rock band, I'm still in my twenties. [Laughs.]

**Greg:** Yeah, once you hit your thirties you gotta hang it up.

**Billy:** I'm 31.

**Greg:** I'm as old as you, if not older, I'm 39. But don't put that down. I won't be able to get the 21-year-olds anymore.

**Billy:** 21-year-old dudes.

**Greg:** Yeah? Your mom... [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** So, Greg, would you say that this band is a lot more fun than any of your previous ones?

**Greg:** Uh, yeah, actually I would. It's good because I think, I gotta be honest with you, as soon as I first picked up the bass and started Supercharger we had, like, instant fame just for being so inept. And no matter what band I was in after the Rip Offs it was like four egos big-time. Big egos, and I was trying to mediate them all. I'd have a lot of jealousy directed at me, like, I was getting a lot of attention because I was in Supercharger, and then The Infections was like a continuation of the Rip Offs, in a way; me and Shane still doin' it. And it was like the same thing, just more jealousy and more bullshit. We shouldn't have played in The Infections, really. So this time I'm really glad, though, because, like Jill was saying, she really didn't know who I was, and Billy kinda knew maybe a little bit, but not so much. Jeremy was the only one who knew. So, to me it's better to have people that are not so hung up on something. It's like getting fresh blood that want to play, and that's really what it's all about. I mean, playing with, let's say, Shane, I love the guy and stuff—he's a great guitar player and he's in the Loose Lips now and stuff—but, it's just that once you've played with him and his ego, and he's really jealous of my success in the previous band and he never let me forget it.

**HIAMB:** So are you and Shane still friends then?

**Greg:** Yeah, yeah, yeah...

**Billy:** Not after he reads this... [Laughs.]

**Greg:** No, he knows. I even have it on my web site, man, how he did that. It's not a problem, he knows. We were just talkin' about it last week, so yeah...

**Billy:** He's gonna fuck you up in their next interview.

**Greg:** Yeah, he's done worse, man. We've already gone to town... Everything I'm saying in this interview I'd say right to the person.

**Jill:** Plus, we can listen to *Tube Bar* on the road 20,000 times and never get tired of it...

**Greg:** It's our favorite.

**Billy:** I don't know about "never getting tired of it!" [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** The prank-call thing?

**Greg:** Yeah. Well I had the original one and then we found an extra one with stuff we'd never heard before and we were all like "Oh my god!"

**HIAMB (Bill):** Ya know, if you like that, there's a movie called *The Corndog Man* you should check out if you get a chance.

**Billy:** Yeah, I wanna see *Corndog Man* now. You're the second person that's said that.



**HIAMB (Bill):** It's kind of the same concept as the *Tube Bar* tapes.

**Jeremy:** See, we never listen to music, since we're not really musicians, [laughs] so we can only listen to talking and spoken word when we're in the car... talk radio, speeches... [More laughter.]

**HIAMB:** Do you think Rip Off Records has given your band an advantage over other bands out there playing and trying to get signed or whatever, ya know, since you can put out your own records?

**Greg:** Well, I don't think that's necessarily true. I guess the bottom line is I feel—and I know I'll come off sounding arrogant—that good music is good music no matter what. And if somebody hears about something on my label, let's say in St. Louis or wherever else, it's gonna be heard. I mean, this stuff is very cultish, sell maybe a couple thousand of 'em, whatever. It's always been cultish and that's the way I like it. And it needs to be that way. Rip Off Records is not, ya know; you never see ads. I just don't do it. It's more word of mouth. I love that aspect of it. I don't think we have an advantage over other bands. Other bands will go to a label and that label may push them, let's say Sympathy or whoever, if they're really into the band. I don't think it's an advantage just because I have the label because a lot of people, of course, don't know who Rip Off Records is, and if you ask 50 people at the club tonight, they're gonna say, "Who? What label?" You know they won't know.

**Jeremy:** It's definitely not an advantage for us, as band members. I can say that! [Laughs.]

**Greg:** There are some advantages, I guess, because my name does help get me into a lot of doors that it didn't before. I mean, but I'm just not that aggressive about it like a lot of band people who've been doing it a long time like me. They know how to like, wheel & deal, but I'm just not that way. I'd rather have the band sell itself, ya know, the music.

**Jill:** And we're definitely do-it-yourself. We scrape by with every penny we have to get the next set of records, or t-shirts that are made at the last minute. It's all out of our own pockets. There's no money in this record label, let me tell ya!

**Jeremy:** The label pays for the drugs and the whores. That's about it.

**Greg:** But we all fuck your mom, so... [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** So what do you think has kept Rip Off Records going then, after so many years? Ya know, like so many labels will fold after just a few releases. What's keeping you in the black?

**Greg:** I think it's the base core of fans that know and trust my judgement in putting out good music. And I'm very fond of it. I've made money off of every release I've done. I've basically been living off the label since like '95. And I've worked here and there, odd jobs and stuff, but I always go back to the label, and I always make money off the label, which is incredible because I never started it to make money. I mean I'm not making a ton; I'm not rich. But there's enough for me to do it, ya know... it's good.

**HIAMB:** What do the rest of you do, ya know, for a living or whatever?

**Jeremy:** Work, like fuckin' regular slob.

**Billy:** I kick assholes out of clubs.

**Greg:** He's a bouncer, obviously.

**HIAMB (Bill):** Really? I couldn't tell. [Laughs.]

**Jill:** I work at a graphics company, so I'm able to make cool flyers and posters. I got the good access there goin' on...

**HIAMB:** Oh, your new record... I noticed it has about the same number of songs as the first one but clocks in at an additional seven minutes in total length.

That said, is it safe to say you guys are turning into a hippie jam band? [Laughs.]

**Greg:** That's right! Well, I have a theory... the first record was like about ten minutes, this one's about twenty and the next one will be like forty! We'll just double it every time! [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** Who's the most musically talented member of the band?

**Greg:** Oh, hands down, me. Hands down!

**Billy:** Hands-down is kinda how he plays his bass...

**Jeremy:** Personally, I'd have to say myself... [Laughs.]

**Jill:** Everybody in this band has a particular talent. Jeremy's a ripping guitar player. Greg is really good at coming up with cool, catchy lyrics...

**Jeremy:** Billy's the fuckin' hardest-hitting drummer you'll ever hear.

**Jill:** Yeah, Billy's the best drummer I've ever played with.

**Billy:** Well, I used to be a pretty good drummer, but now I'm in this band... [Laughs.]



**Jeremy:** Yeah, it's a compromise, for sure.

**Greg:** And Jill, well, it all goes back to the sex aspect, doesn't it?

**We're definitely do-it-yourself. We scrape by with every penny...**

**Jill:** Oh, I can

hold the rhythm down. I do my

job, ya know...

**Greg:** The thing is, and I firmly believe this, that it has nothing to do with talent. It's all about writing a song, a



simple song. Dee Dee Ramone could never play his bass but he wrote some of the best songs ever. And that's really what it is. Punk rock was meant for anybody to be able to do it. And it's all show. It's all for fun.

**HIAMB:** Has your snotty attitudes that you convey on your records ever gotten you into trouble, or caused any negative reaction from fans or members of the crowd at your shows?

**Greg:** No, actually, I've been doing that bad attitude thing since the Rip Offs and I've never really had any problems. I think people know it's an act. But there's always some

yahoo that is thinking about it, "Ah, man, I'm gonna kick his ass..."

**Jill:** But then you go to some town and they really start taking it personally, like he's really singled out Missoula or whatever. There was a girl up in Missoula that came up to me after our show and she was like, "I really liked your band but I didn't like all the stuff he was sayin' about Missoula."

**Billy:** Yeah, but we get one of those in every crowd, though...

**Greg:** Yeah, I know, they like take it seriously.

**Jill:** Ya know, he said the same stuff about fuckin' Seattle!

**Greg:** We're gonna say the same stuff about St. Louis tonight, so... [Laughs.]

**Jeremy:** It's hard to piss people off when no one knows who the fuck you are.

**Greg:** Yeah, if you're just some band up there they don't give a fuck. But some people really take cuttin' up on their city really personally. It's really funny, man. It's like in San Francisco, The Chinese Millionaires played one time and some guy did that. This guy was trying to beat his ass, and he was big, like Billy. And I stopped him; I said "Hey, calm down. He's just fuckin' joking." I'm in the audience right next to him, right? Turns out the guy just got out of prison for manslaughter or murder or something so yeah, luckily I haven't ran into those murderers yet wanting to kick my ass! **Jeremy:** (Making a public service announcement) People, it's all a joke, ok? It's just in fun.

**HIAMB:** So why does everyone think you're an asshole, Greg?

**Greg:** Uhhh... part of it is because of the stage persona, and...

**Jill:** And because he is!

**Billy:** Or because they were in a band with him. [Laughs.]

**Jill:** But he's a loveable asshole!

**Greg:** The thing is, I'm not here to make everyone my fuckin' friend. I'm here to have fun. I don't think anybody who ever talked bad about me would say that I was insincere or didn't say things straight to their face. Like, if I had a problem with them or whatever. Because I do. And I think I'm so up front that people are shocked by that. I don't hide anything. I'll tell you right up front that you're fuckin' being a dick, you're an asshole, I don't like you, stay away from me, whatever.

**Jill:** ...I wanna fuck you...

**Greg:** And you know as well as I do that, playing in bands, you get the biggest fuckin' freaks known to mankind, and it's just the nature of the beast. People can call me whatever they want, and if they don't know me, that's usually what it is; people don't know me. They hear I'm an asshole, this or that, or some band member had a problem with me. Big fuckin' deal. You be in a band with 'em then.

**HIAMB:** So what've been some of the best shows you've played so far?

**Jeremy:** Seattle.

**Greg:** Seattle... Missoula was very fun. I loved Missoula.

**Jeremy:** Seattle's just a rockin' town and we had a really good response there. It sounded good.

**HIAMB:** Finally, in honor of the 'zine and the Angry Samoans, can you play "Not of This Earth" for us tonight?

**Greg:** [Laughs.] We can't do that!

**Jeremy:** Yeah, it takes us like three months to learn a song!

**Greg:** You're asking the wrong band! What d'you think we are, like, trained professionals?

**Jeremy:** You think we're like the Phish? [Laughs.]

**Greg:** We'll play "Steak Knife" for ya, how's that? It's close enough!

**Billy:** At least we'll play the first half of it! [Laughs.]

For more info on The Zodiac Killers visit the Rip Off Records web site at <http://www.ripoffrecords.org>, or write to 581 Maple Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066.





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# KNUCKEL DRAGER

By  
Kopper  
& Bill



Knuckel Drager (sic) played the Hi-Pointe in St. Louis in July. If you haven't caught this act yet, don't miss them the next time they're in town! Their rock-hard blend of loud and raunchy instrumental monster surf and drag punk is packed with just enough pyrotechnic theater, humor, screaming guitar, fuzz and just plain wild stage antics to make even the most jaded rock 'n' roll music fan wanna shake their ass.

Davie Allan & The Arrows comparisons seem obvious, but they add so

much more to the music than just great fuzz-laden guitar distortion and biker/hot rod imagery. Davie Allan meets The Bomboras? Los Straitjackets meet Man or Astro-Man? Who knows? Who cares? As far as we're concerned they're one of a kind. We're not lying when we say they're one of the best live surf/instrumental bands we've ever seen, and we feel honored to have them play such frequent gigs here in the River City.

Knuckel Drager is from Mad City, Wisconsin. They formed in 1997 and quickly developed a cult following




**GIRLS,  
DO NOT  
COME  
ALONE!**

Bring your boyfriend to protect  
you when the lights go out!

**MAX WEDGE**

A Burn  
Victim Zombie  
Wearing A Fez



FABRICA

throughout the Midwest. It's weird that a band this good hasn't attracted much interest from record labels, but I guess that would take some label types actually catching one of their entertaining performances, and it's not like garage/surf record labels are growing on trees, especially around the Midwest. But if any of you out there are reading this, and just happen to run your own label, you should definitely look into picking these guys up. You won't be sorry.

Now, according to Madison folklore, legend has it that Roddy Milkbone (a.k.a. that crazy, mixed-up "Dr. Evil?") is a deformed ex-Foghat roadie-turned-mad scientist who brought all of the other band members back from the grave in the name of rock 'n' roll. Organist Max Wedge appears to be a burn victim zombie wearing a fez. El Diablo, one of the guitarists, is Satan's 334-year-old son-in-law with big sideburns and an iron cross on his... is that another fez!? Shaftman is the NON-fez wearing bassist "walking zombie of late '70s audio pornstar Al DePantseu." Baron Von Loser is a *Planet of the Apes* version of a Hell's Angel with hair that's been dyed red by the blood of helpless virgins sacrificed at previous shows. And rhythm guitarist Major Rager is a skeleton with an afro that dresses like a disco cowboy. Sound scary? You'd better fuckin' believe it! These hideous creatures have been known to leave the stage and grab girls right out of their seats! Girls, do not come alone! Bring your boyfriend to protect you when the lights go out. You may find a live snake or a rat under your seat. A real dead body is given away to some lucky person at every performance!

**HIAMB: Who are you and what do you do?**

**Roddy Milkbone:** Guns and bombs. Max Wedge does keys, samples and bitches. [Max Wedge wasn't present for the interview.]

**Major Rager:** Major Rager does guitar.

**El Diablo:** El Diablo, guitar.

**Shaft Man:** Shaft Man, bass.

**Baron Von Loser:** Rob Loser, guitar.

# UNMASKED!

Photos By: Bill Streeter



# KNUCKEL DRAGER UNMASKED

**HIAMB:** Have you guys always had the same lineup? I guess not since you said there's a newbie...

**Roddy Milkbone:** Umm ... Loser is the new guy. We had a couple of other guys filling in for Major Rager since he can't tour, so we break the six piece down into a five piece then. Von Loser takes all of Rager's parts, basically.

**El Diablo:** The original five is the original lineup from like four years ago. It's just all the same people except for Von loser, and the occasional hitchhiker we pick up along the way.

**HIAMB:** Loser, how did you get mixed up with these guys?

**Baron Von Loser:** Well they cornered me and forced me to join with tasers and beatings.

**El Diablo:** We picked him up hitchhiking

**Roddy Milkbone:** Yeah, we said "You put out or you get out, man!"

**Baron Von Loser:** That's pretty much it.

**HIAMB:** Are you all originally from Madison?

**Baron Von Loser:** No, I'm originally from Illinois. Everyone else is from Madison.

**HIAMB:** Where in Illinois?

**Baron Von Loser:** Decatur, the armpit. Everything in Illinois just sucks ass. [Everyone laughs because it's true.]

**Baron Von Loser:** It does man! That's why I got outta there and hitchhiked to Madison.

**HIAMB:** Do any of you really ride motorcycles or own a hot rod?

**Everyone:** Oh yeah!

**Roddy Milkbone:** I'd say there are at least four hot rods in the group.

**Shaft Man:** Do you want us to list off the individual cars?

**HIAMB:** Sure. Let's hear 'em.

**Shaft Man:** Okay there is Max Wedge's drag car which is a tubbed-out Volaré Road Runner, which, I believe, is a '74 or '76. I, Shaft Man, have a 1963 Plymouth Fury. We also have a 1965 Dodge A-100 Microbus... a little mini-van.

**Roddy Milkbone:** You know that van that they used to drive on Scooby Do? That's what it was.

**Shaft Man:** The "abductor van"—there are no windows...



This rhythm guitarist is a skeleton with an afro that dresses like a disco cowboy!

**Roddy Milkbone:** Shut up, man! Don't say anything about that! You're telling them too much. They didn't need to know that! What we do after hours is our own business!

**Shaft Man:** Well that rounds it out for anything that's like old, Max Wedge has a newer Dodge GLH Turbo Omni. GLH stands for "Goes Like Hell."

**Roddy Milkbone:** That's why he's not here—he's out tracking down a fuel pump right now.

**Shaft Man:** None of us own motorcycles, though. Can you believe that? None of us own bikes! [Laughs.]

**El Diablo:** We have a mini-bike.

**Shaft Man:** Oh yeah! It's pretty old and it doesn't have a muffler. So I guess we do have a bike.

**HIAMB:** Who rides the mini-bike?

**Shaft Man:** Max Wedge.

**El Diablo:** We have had motorcycles, but none of us own them right now.

**HIAMB:** So what's the story with the costumes? When did you first start wearing them?

**Shaft man:** We've always done it.

**El Diablo:** Always.



**Major Rager:** Ever since our first show we thought it would be a good idea.

**Shaft Man:** It was sorta like our backstage persona.

**Major Rager:** Right...

**HIAMB:** Was it an original idea you had when you first formed the group?

**Roddy Milkbone:** For the most part... it kinda eliminates any rock stars being in the group, really. Well, also, at our first show I didn't want a certain promoter in town to know that I was playing with another group. So I sort of dressed up and hid. But, I just tell everybody now that it eliminates any possibility of any rock stars being in the group. Because then the persona that each of us has is the rock star, not any of the guys themselves.

**Major Rager:** Plus, after that first show, it was so fun we just stuck with it.

**Roddy Milkbone:** Then everyone else started dressing up. Putting on stupid-ass masks and shit.

**Major Rager:** Yeah!

**HIAMB:** Were there any other bands doing it at the time?

**Shaft Man:** Well, The Mummies had been doing it...

**Roddy Milkbone:** I never saw any other bands doing it.

**Shaft Man:** The Mentors...

**HIAMB:** Gwar...

**Major Rager:** The only band I knew that was doing it was Los Straitjackets.

**Shaft Man:** It's not like we were the only band to do it or anything like that...

**HIAMB:** When did you first start playing together?

**El Diablo:** [To the other guys] When was our first show?

**Major Rager:** Our first show was June of '97, I think...

## EL DIABLO

Satan's 334-year-old son-in-law with big sideburns and an iron cross on his... fez?





# KNUCKEL DRAGER UNMASKED



**Roddy Milkbone:** But we had been playing together for six months before that.

**El Diablo:** Yeah...

**Roddy Milkbone:** Those were, um... the metal years.

**Shaft Man:** Ha-ha! Yeah!

**Major Rager:** Well after our first show you might as well call that the beginning because Max Wedge had only joined the band a couple of months before, and before that we were just dicking around ... When we started we had no idea what we were going to do, zero idea. No vision whatsoever.

**HIAMB:** Oh, really? Did you have vocals or anything originally? Did anyone sing?

**Major Rager:** No, huh-uh.

**HIAMB:** So you knew from the get-go that you were going to be an instrumental band?

**Roddy Milkbone:** Well there was only one guy that we ever classed as our singer, our buddy, John. But he could barely sing in front of El Diablo and myself let alone in front of a crowd, so he got worked out of the band pretty quickly. But we'll call him our only singer, ever.

**Major Rager:** It just kinda came together because all the equipment we had was Fender and we were trying to play all distorted and shit but we eventually turned it off and just played clean.

**Roddy Milkbone:** Yeah, at first you guys were tuning to drop-D and shit and trying to play surf in drop-D...

**Major Rager:** Yeah, we were tuning low... We tried that.

**Roddy Milkbone:** Then we discovered B.

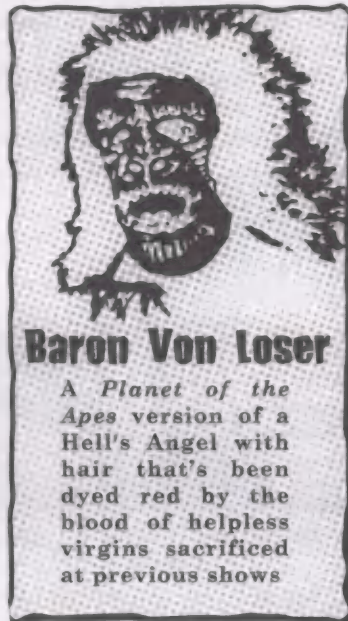
**Passer-by:** [Pointing at the door to Del Taco] Are they open?

**Major Rager:** No, you can only drive-thru.

**Passer-by:** But it's only 9 o'clock!

**Shaft Man:** Yeah, I know. It's fucked up!

**HIAMB:** Why don't you walk through the drive-thru?



## Baron Von Loser

A Planet of the Apes version of a Hell's Angel with hair that's been dyed red by the blood of helpless virgins sacrificed at previous shows

**Major Rager:** No, we tried that. They have a sign saying they won't serve you on foot.

**Roddy Milkbone:** That's ridiculous!

**El Diablo:** Sons-of-bitches!

**Baron Von Loser:** I would like to add that Del Taco has disappointed us.

**HIAMB:** They must have gotten robbed or something...

**Major Rager:** There was this place we stopped at in Detroit, a gas station in the middle of the day and you couldn't even go in! You had to stand outside and say: "Umm, I'll have a Mountain Dew, and a bag of Funyons..." and they would go and get it for you and shove it threw this fuckin' thing...

**HIAMB:** So name some influences.

**Shaft Man:** Nancy Sinatra.

**Roddy Milkbone:** Rock 'n' roll in general—anything that rocks, really.

**El Diablo:** All '80s metal.

**HIAMB:** '80s hair bands?

**El Diablo:** Yeah, exactly!

**Major Rager:** It's all over the place, really ... Seriously.

**Shaft Man:** Davie Allan...

**El Diablo:** The Mummies. We really like The Mummies...

**Shaft Man:** Bomboras, god rest their souls...

**HIAMB:** Have you heard The Invisible Men's stuff yet?

**El Diablo:** Oh yeah! They're great.

**HIAMB:** You guys drop in a lot of cult movie trailer samples into your music. Did you start doing this from the beginning or did it come about later?

**Major Rager:** We just happened to be practicing in a place where Max lived and he just happened to have a sampler there and he would play samples while we were playing. And we were like, "That's fucking cool!"

**Roddy Milkbone:** Pretty much right from the beginning. We didn't wanna do much talking, so we would start off with a tape loop and then he [Max Wedge] would stick in a few samples throughout the song. But eventually that got too hard to do.

**Major Rager:** It was way more low tech back then because we literally just had a cassette tape deck and he would just hit play—that's how we would do it live. Now he's actually got a sampler; it's got a lot of memory so it makes it easier.

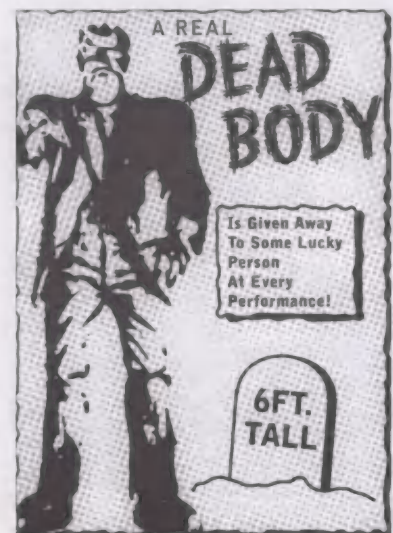
**HIAMB:** Do you make up songs based on samples or is it the other way around?

**Major Rager:** No, huh-uh. We basically write the song and then think of samples to go with it. It's the last thing we do.

**El Diablo:** We have a stock pile of samples we can use.

**HIAMB:** Who came up with the idea to use pyrotechnics?

**El Diablo:** That would be me.





# KNUCKEL DRAGER UNMASKED

**Roddy Milkbone:** El Diablo made these crazy flash pots out of soup cans and cinder blocks and filled 'em up with gun powder and lit them on stage with a lighter. That was ridiculous...

**Baron Von Loser:** You almost killed me with one of them!

**Roddy Milkbone:** It was outta control! Shaft Man would accidentally knock one over and it would go off sideways...

**El Diablo:** It would occasionally shoot out into the crowd, too.

**Shaft Man:** We did that once here, remember that? At the Hi-Pointe! We dropped one behind a monitor and started it a fire. [Laughs.]

**El Diablo:** We use professional flash pots now so it's a lot safer, and Max rigged his Farfisa with propane so it shoots flames.

**HIAMB:** [to Roddy, because he acts like such a bad-ass] Have you ever gotten into a fistfight at one of your shows?

**Roddy Milkbone:** Umm, well I really wanted to kick the ass of that singer from Supafuzz. I call Supafuzz the "Anvil Case Band" because they had more Anvil Cases than they had room in their van! They played at this club in Madison called The Inferno for about five people and they did this hour-and-a-half-long sound check and they were acting like they were rock stars and shit. So after we played I announced that they were up next and that they were the Anvil Case Band. Afterwards he came up to me and asked me what that was supposed to mean and shit. I asked him if he wanted to take it

outside, but he didn't, so I left. Afterwards I heard he was talking all kinds of shit about me, saying I was probably out sucking dick in the parking lot and stuff, so, yeah, I really wish I would've stayed and jumped his ass. I hope he reads this cuz I would really like to meet him again, the little punk... His band sucks too!

**HIAMB:** Who the hell is this band?



**Roddy Milkbone:** Supafuzz? They're some band from Lexington, Kentucky. According to them everybody knows about them.

**HIAMB:** Huh. So, tell us about some of your best shows.

**Roddy Milkbone:** I think the first time we played the Hi-Pointe was pretty cool.

**HIAMB:** Have you played anywhere outside of the Midwest?

**Shaft Man:** We've only played the Midwest.

**Roddy Milkbone:** Omaha, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Minneapolis, Chicago a couple of times...

**El Diablo:** Detroit...

**HIAMB:** So do you think you've developed a pretty large following?

**El Diablo:** We have a cult following.

**Shaft Man:** Our demographic is like the guys in those little gas station booths playing air guitar. [Laughs.] Yeah, guys with mullets playing air guitar...

**El Diablo:** Junkies...

**HIAMB:** Any festivals or anything?

**Roddy Milkbone:** We played at Summerfest in Sioux City, Iowa!

**HIAMB:** How about Sleazefest or anything like that?

**El Diablo:** No, not really. Not yet, anyway.



**HIAMB:** When is your new CD gonna be out?

**El Diablo:** In about a month, I hope.

**HIAMB:** Are you going to send it to some labels?

**El Diablo:** Um, yeah we have, but the thing is that unless you've seen us live it's hard to "get it" from just listening to a CD.

**HIAMB:** Are you going to tour at all?

**Roddy Milkbone:** In October we're going to tour out west to California and up to Oregon and come back the northern route.

**Shaft Man:** We hope to be playing Stinky's Peepshow in San Francisco.

**HIAMB:** Any plans on making a movie or anything goofy like that?

**Roddy Milkbone:** Yeah, actually. We were going to get those little cameras installed in the van and do our own version of Bands on the Run, except with drugs and porn.

If you'd like to contact them to see if they'd wanna play in your lousy town, or to request a copy of their CD, write to them at

## MAIL

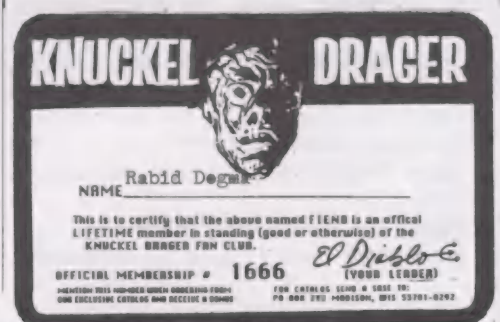
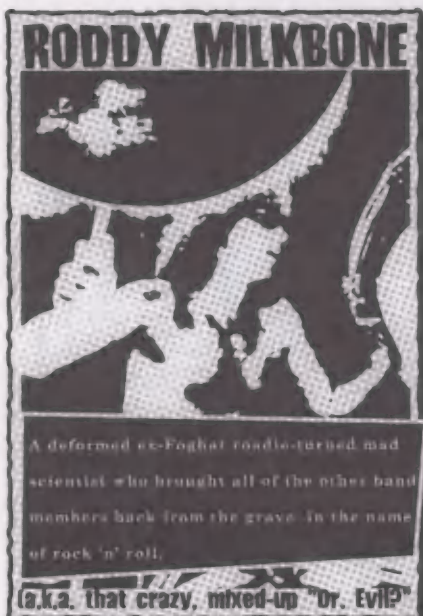
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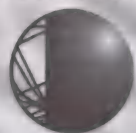
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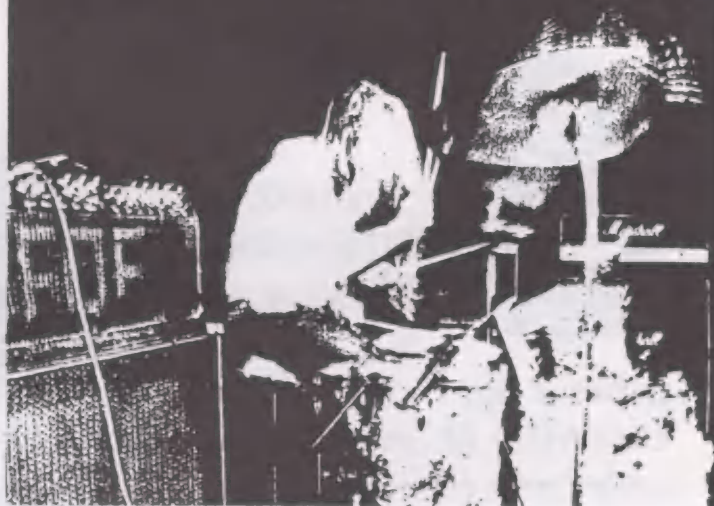
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# THE BIG BROAD GUERRILLA MONSTER THAT ATE MEMPHIS!



In 1993,  
Filmmaker J.  
Michael  
McCarthy

formed Big Broad  
Guerrilla Monster, the  
only indy film company  
in Memphis, and dedicated  
it to spreading the  
"GOSPELVIS."

"No matter what we talk about I can always draw it back to Elvis." J. Michael McCarthy draws with a twinkle in his eye that makes me wonder if he's really serious or maybe just a little crazy. One might say that he is both. Of course, being crazy is an asset if you want to make no-budget independent films. Mike, or "JMM" as he is known, has made several, starting with *Damselvis* in 1994 right up through *E\*vis Meets the Beat\*es* in 2000. It all started with comic books and a message that "Elvis is the King of All Pop Culture."

We sit at an antique '50s dinette set in his modest Memphis home. The dinette set is just one of many things that reaffirms his obsession with classic Twentieth-Century American culture. His attic studio is packed with comic books, '60s pop culture posters, Elvis memorabilia, and of course, relics of his own films. The backroom of his home not only showcases a very impressive collection of Something Weird videos, but is crammed almost to the ceiling full of large unmarked cardboard boxes containing old 16mm films. Not his own, but prints he bought from the Memphis Board of Education. "I guess this is the kind of trouble you get into when you own a pickup truck. I just kept going back and buying more and more of them," he admits. There is everything from old Fat Albert films to the movies you might remember from junior high health class (if you are old enough to remember seeing real films in school). The rest of his house is decorated in kitschie '50s and '60s art and retro furniture.

"I am the First Disciple of the Blue Light of Capricorn—which was the comet that Elvis's father saw the day Elvis and Arron [Elvis's dead twin brother] were born," he says. When he says this I see the kind of crazy glimmer in his eye that I remember seeing in the eyes of the old Southern revivalist preachers I met when I was a kid. "Elvis is the King of entertainment and pop culture—and the King of neo-paganism. And he returned America and the rest of the civilized world to its pre-Christian roots," he preaches. This is the part of the "GOSPELVIS," a blend of pop culture theory, paganism, numerology, and just a pinch of good old-fashioned







American eccentricity. "What I'm into isn't popular anymore. What I'm into was popular basically during the life span of Elvis, specifically 1935–1977. I defy you to identify anything of *any* value in pop culture that's come about since Elvis died." He's not kidding, and the more you think about it, he's *right*!

JMM's filmmaking career started when he met filmmaker Hugh Gallagher. Hugh was looking to cast and shoot a horror film in Memphis. "I realized (frustratingly so) by watching him shoot *Gorotica* ('92) that I could do a much more self-conscious and stylish job than he could *ever* attempt." Up until this time JMM had been a comic book artist for Fantagraphics, Dark Horse, and Apple Comics. He began to see movies as a new way to do what he was doing in comics but much *faster*, to bring the message of the GOSPELVIS to the masses. "I could spend nine months drawing a comic book and maybe three or four people would actually read it, but, I could make a film in about a month and reach hundreds." Of course, he discovered that film has its own set of barriers and drawbacks. One drawback—as any would-be filmmaker knows—is that to make a film you need a *lot* of money. JMM managed to convince a few people to finance his films. "Suckers" he jokingly called them, but in reality he really is grateful for all the money he's been given to pursue his cinematic endeavors. Not that it has ever really paid off. But obviously he kept at it, undaunted by the starving artist lifestyle. The other drawback is on the creative side. As comic book artist he has learned to work alone. But filmmaking is a collaborative process, a process that he's not particularly at ease with. "It's quite possible that there may be something that you might like in one of my films that I had nothing to do with," he laughs.

The starving artist lifestyle may sound romantic to some, but factor in a wife, a beautiful, young daughter (both have appeared in his films) and a hefty mortgage payment and it could quickly become a very realistic nightmare. "I don't know if I can make another film. I mean, I can't make another on my own money—I just can't afford it," he says, not so much in a hopeless tone of voice, but that of someone who's just facing the reality of the situation. Some indy filmmakers claim to be working class—

JMM really is—working two jobs just to make ends meet. This is a fact that obviously bothers him, but talk to him long enough and you'll realize that that's not the point. It's really just all about Elvis.

The lives of J. Michael McCarthy and Elvis Presley have a few interesting parallels. Both were born in East Tupelo, Mississippi, and both made their adult homes in

Memphis, Tennessee. JMM's "Graceland" is a vintage home in a sleepy Memphis neighborhood. "It was inevitable that I would end up in Memphis,"

JMM grew up poor. He was adopted into a poor, working class family. When he was a child his family never did any traveling. His father, who worked in a factory, was so eager for a break from the strenuous work that his vacations were spent relaxing on the couch, watching



**"I AM THE FIRST DISCIPLE OF  
THE BLUE LIGHT OF CAPRICORN  
—WHICH WAS THE COMET THAT  
ELVIS'S FATHER SAW THE DAY  
ELVIS AND ARRON [ELVIS'S DEAD  
TWIN BROTHER] WERE BORN."**

## MUSIC VIDEOS:

**GUITAR WOLF**  
"Butobase"  
"Invader Ace"

**THE MAKERS**  
"Lover Lover"  
"Psychotropic Supergirl"  
"(Are You on the Inside or  
the Outside of Your  
Pants?)"

**OBLIVIANS**  
"The Leather"







**"...THE '90S WERE KIND OF LIKE A BIG GARAGE SALE FOR THE 20TH CENTURY, EVERYONE WAS TRYING TO RECYCLE DIFFERENT PARTS OF CLASSIC AMERICAN POP CULTURE. GARAGE PUNK WAS THE ULTIMATE FORM OF MUSIC FOR THE '90S ..."**

television, at home. So JMM's boyhood observations of the world around him were filtered through a menagerie of '60s and '70s comic books he collected and the mythical world of television. As an adopted child he never really knew his biological parents. Even though he has never met her, he does know who his biological mother is, but his father remains a mystery. As a creative kid growing up in Elvis's hometown, it wasn't hard for him to imagine that Elvis *might* be his real father. He explores this very possibility as the theme in his film *Teenage Tupelo*. He explains, "My bio-mother saw Elvis play at the '56 Tupelo Fair when she was barely a teenager. You can see her in the famous photo of Elvis singing and reaching out to the crowd of mostly young women. At the exact same show, the people who would adopt me years later are sitting in the back row. Elvis is my divine arbiter of synchronicity."

He grew up wanting to be a comic book artist but he really didn't think that he would ever make it. That dream seemed even more remote once he graduated from high school and went to work in the very same factory that his father slaved away at because all of his college applications were turned down. He later began studying architecture and drafting in New Albany, Mississippi. "A Mississippi public education will get you nowhere. You know, that's why Elvis wasn't so bright, either," he admits. Collette Cross, an administrator at WP Daniel Vo-Tech in New Albany, Mississippi, told JMM that there was an art school, Northeast Junior College in Booneville that he should consider applying to. He dismissed it. He couldn't see quitting his job for art school. But she insisted that he at least visit the school and see what he thought. Finally, he agreed to do just that, and when he arrived he discovered that she had not only already enrolled him there, but had also paid for his first semester's tuition! He's been a Memphis fixture ever since.

While at school in Booneville, JMM met a guy named George Cole. George turned him on to punk rock and underground comics. In 1984 they moved to Memphis. JMM began going to art school here and he and George formed a pop band called The Rockroaches and played around Memphis until 1992. He began drawing comic books, in pursuit of his teenage dream. But reality set in and he soon discovered that he really couldn't make a living at it. But as an artist he did books like *Cadavera* and made many contacts in the underground comic book world. Among these contacts was Hugh Gallagher, the filmmaker that would later inspire him to make his own films.

He claims to be influenced more by comics than by any filmmaker, and that's pretty evident in his films. Visually, his film compositions are sharp, colorful and defined, even in black and white. These visuals are paired with a spaghetti western-style soundscape that lends a layer of surrealism. He has been compared to a cross between John Waters and Russ Meyer, but I don't know if that's accurate, or fair. For one thing, his films seem to be more along the lines of a Roger Corman film with their half-baked plots and low-budget antics. But there are also elements of Jean Luc Goddard, with long introspective pauses and a leisurely pace. Combine these elements with a comic book aesthetic and antique stag reel burlesque and you might begin to imagine what his films are really like. In reality, JMM is a true original.

It's more likely that you would be aware of JMM's films if you're into garage punk or primitive, underground rock'n'roll. The soundtracks to his films have probably outsold the films themselves, having appeared on the Long Beach, California-based Sympathy for the Record Industry label





(www.sympathyrecords.com). JMM claims that he didn't set out to make movies with garage punk scores. He says that the bands that have performed in his films, and the members of some of those bands who have also starred in them, just happened to be the people that he was hanging out with at the time. Members of the Oblivians, The Makers, and Guitar Wolf have all made appearances in his films, both as actors and performing on the soundtracks. Impala, a fantastic surf and instrumental R&B band from Memphis, even turned in the full score to *Teenage Tupelo*. To him, garage rock is a natural match to his message of primal Elvisness. He says, "Hippie rock is tribal. They're out there following bands around, trying to be all peaceful and communal. On the other hand, garage rock is primal—it's about being an individual in a world that doesn't really appreciate or reward individualism." He adds, "You know, the '90s

were kind of like a big garage sale for the Twentieth Century. Everyone was trying to recycle different parts of classic American pop culture. Garage punk was the ultimate form of music for the '90s and it's not surprising that it's flourishing because it basically combines the raw primal power of '50s rockabilly, '60s garage, and punk rock with the soulfulness of old blues men."

His films aren't totally overlooked. They've been well received in Europe. In fact, a retrospective of his work was held in Spain in October at the Sitges Cinema International, a first for JMM. "It's funny, because they really seem to understand me in Europe. They seem to really appreciate classic American pop culture more than most people do here."

Nowadays JMM is dabbling with computer animation. Although he said that he's not sure that he'll make another film he says that he might animate some

## FILMOGRAPHY

*E\*VIS MEETS THE BEAT\*ES* (or "Elvis Is Alive, Paul Is Dead, and I Ain't Feeling So Well")

An Unpopular movie (short) about the most popular icons of our time

(JMM: producer, writer, director)

*SUPERSTARLET A.D.* (2000)

"Beauty cults with machine guns in search of ancient stag films hunt cavemen at the end of the world."

(JMM: producer, writer, director)

*SHINE ON SWEET STARLET* (1997)

Are you a guy with sugar to burn? *Shine on Sweet Starlet* is a nudie-cutie punk rock stag loop compilation for guys who love art but ain't gay! See Starlets burlesque to garage rock'n'roll recorded in the most primitive conditions!

Shot on Super-8 film by losers with nothing better to do! Original

soundtrack is now available on SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD

INDUSTRY! (JMM: executive producer, writer, director)

*SORE LOSERS, THE* (1997)

"Hot rod juvenile delinquents from outer space come to Memphis to kill hippies!" *The Sore Losers* is a film for fans of Horror, Sci-Fi, Juvenile Delinquency Films of the past, and for fans of lo-fi garage and punk rock music. Original soundtrack is now available on SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY!

(JMM: executive producer, writer, director)

*TEENAGE TUPELO* (1995)

A semi-auto-bio-sexploitation-comedy-drama film! Starlet D'Lana Tunnell in her first starring role! Original music by recording champs Impala! Available now on LP & CD on SYMPATHY FOR THE RECORD INDUSTRY!

(JMM: producer, writer, director)

*GORE WHORE* (1994)

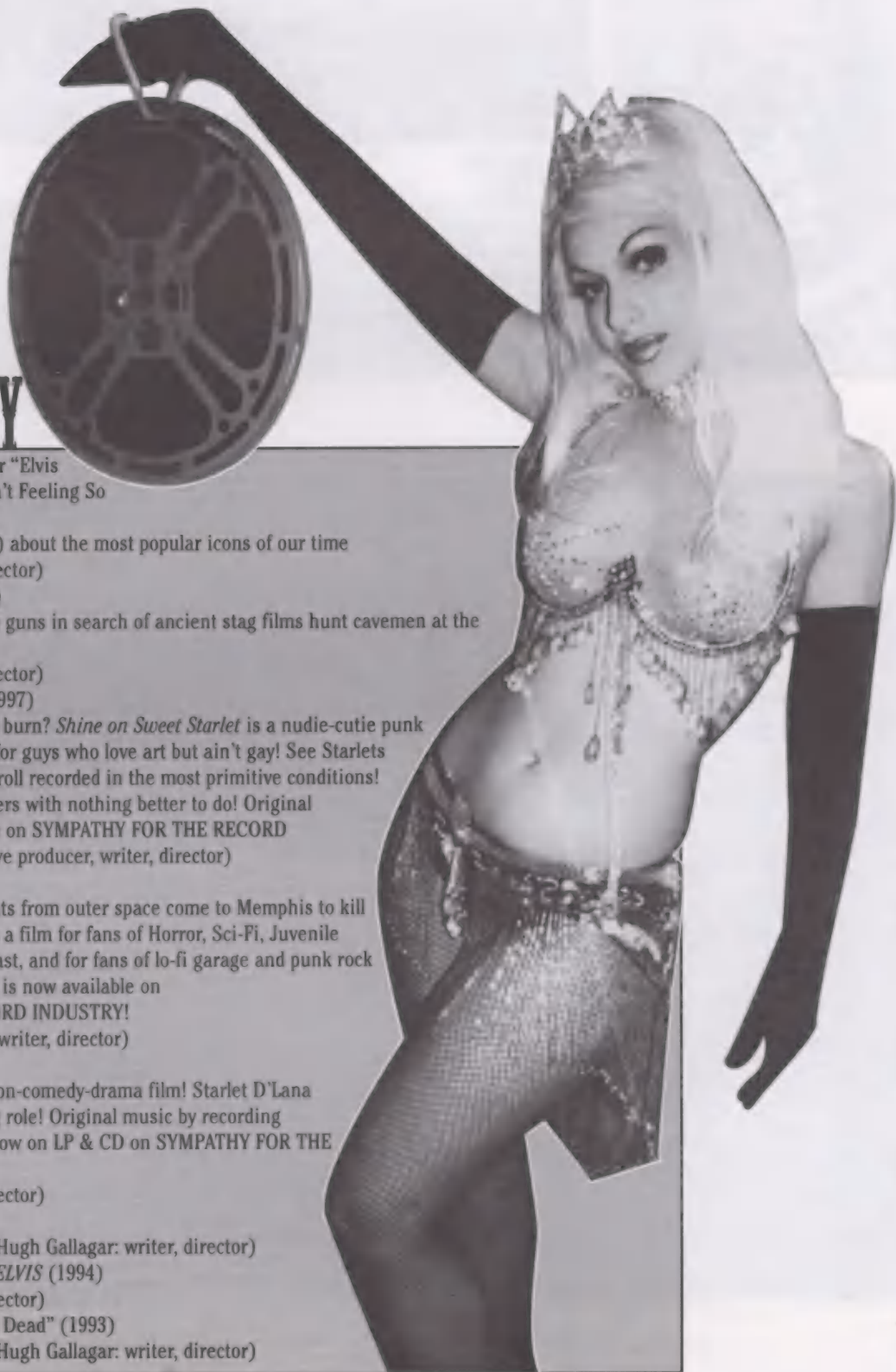
(JMM: associate producer, Hugh Gallagher: writer, director)

*DAMSELVIS, DAUGHTER OF HELVIS* (1994)

(JMM: producer, writer, director)

*GOROTICA* a.k.a. "Wake of the Dead" (1993)

(JMM: associate producer, Hugh Gallagher: writer, director)







of his storyboards for possible investors to see. But after having built a respectable filmography, the prospect of sitting in a room by himself tinkering with a computer isn't very appealing to him. "Think about it; I have worked with beautiful women taking off their clothes because I've asked them to—do you really think I want to go back to working by myself?" He laughs, and when he laughs he gets that twinkle in his eye again—that spark that says haven't heard the last from John Michael McCarthy.



## CONTACT

If you would like to order videos you may contact  
J. Michael McCarthy via email at:  
[JMM@bigbroad.com](mailto:JMM@bigbroad.com)  
or visit his Web site at  
[www.bigbroad.com](http://www.bigbroad.com)

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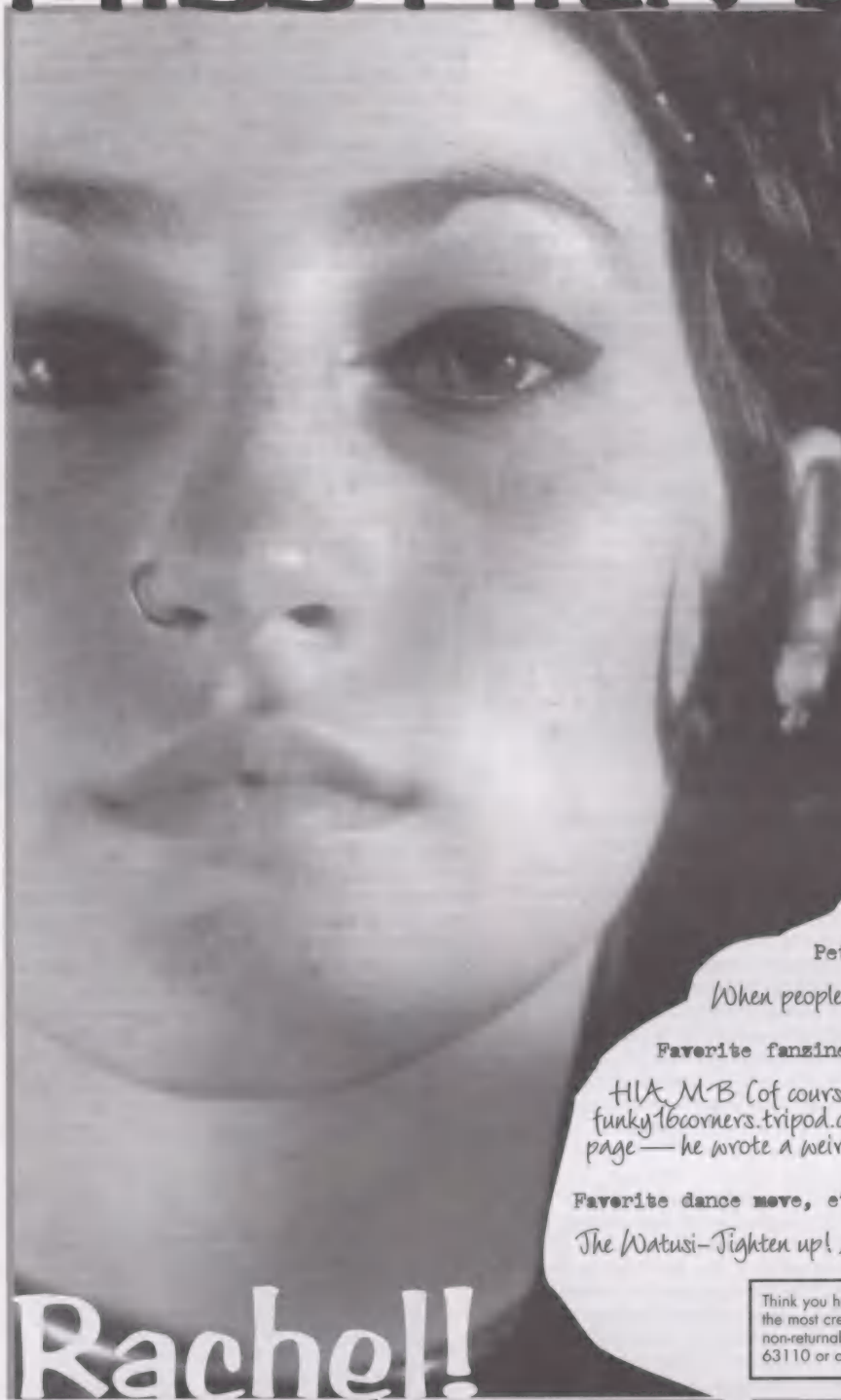
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# MISS MILK BOTTLE



## Name, location, age, etc.

Rachel Marie Ulrich, nickname "Cornbread." Sweet sixteen (I like to keep em guessing). Born & raised in St. Louis, currently residing in Chicago.

## Hobbies, interests:

My bike! Yay!! My pride & joy! 1967 Vespa Primavera, fully restored, seat & spare tire cover by Go-Cat-Go.com (for all your scooter accessory needs), baby blue & chrome — so sweet! Thriftin', e'Bay sellin', sewing...

## Favorite clothing, designers, role models:

Rudi Gernreich, Emilio Pucci, Mary Quant, blah blah blah... all that '60s junk. I think I accumulate a lot of my style from my friends and the people I'm hanging around with. We learn from each other and learn to love each other's style, prolly 'cause we just trade our clothes!

## What instruments you play, favorite bands:

The Zombies, The Beatles (of course), Dusty Springfield, Georgie Fame, The Make-Up (they have awesome style), The Birds, The Marvellettes, Björk (Yay!! I'm there Oct. 14th, 20th row!!), The Shangri-Las, Patsy Cline, The Mooney Suzuki, The Sugarman Three, Elvis Costello, Pizzicato 5, the James Taylor Quartet. I play alto & tenor sax.

## Pet peeves?

When people make honking noises while they blow their nose.

## Favorite fanzines, catalogues, good stuff people should read:

HIA MB (of course), Flotation Device, Ugly Things, funky16corners.tripod.com, dauidavid.net (he has a funny "Thoughts" page — he wrote a weird book, too).

## Favorite dance move, etc:

The Watusi—Tighten up! Always get everyone on the dance floor.

Think you have what it takes to be the next Miss Milk Bottle? Then show us whatcha gott! Only the most creative submissions will be considered so use your imaginations. If interested, send non-returnable hardcopy photos and a bio to: Miss Milk Bottle, PO Box 15125, St. Louis, MO 63110 or contact HIAMB@garagepunk.com about submitting electronic files.

# Rachel!





# VIDEO NASTY

By, Bryan Benson

Right now I am watching a video nasty of a very ghettofied, black, amazon woman relentlessly pummeling the testicles of a sickly looking, crusty, old fat fuck... a really sick bastard! Apparently she is mad because he ate some of her Wendy's chili, mmmmm. I am a video junkie, BONA FIDE! Sometimes I consider myself a video masochist, watching the worst films ever, hating yet enjoying. I can always make up for it in volume, right?

**Turbonegro—The Movie** (Bitzcore BC-1716/1998)  
This is a must for every dedicated Turbonegro fan: 100 minutes filled with all their 4 video clips ("Time Bomb," "Denim Demon," "Get it On" and "Are You Ready for Some Darkness?"), unseen and totally insane live footage from various tours from 1995 thru 1998, including songs from their last show in Oslo in '98, German VIVA TV interviews plus a good selection of their amazing private video archive, including home movies of everything from hanging out and listening to Led Zeppelin to Turbonegro in church! My only complaint is that at 95 minutes this seems a little long. I like 'em short and sweet, but what the fuck. This is Turbonegro, right?!

WITNESS: Sailor boys with moustaches shoot fireworks from the anus!

SHOCKING: Tips on raping women!

EXPERIENCE: The energy of the pizza eating Norwegian gods of death punk performing in black face makeup! A heavy dose of Turbonegro is truly a conscience-expanding experience. Listen for the hip-hop hit, "Turbonegro Never Dies." Got erection? Rated X by an all black jury.

**DEVO—The Men Who Make the Music** (Warner Bros./1979/50 minutes)

Have you got the papers the Chinaman gave you? Please rise for the "DEVO Corporate Anthem!" In the past this information has been suppressed, but now it can be told. Every man, woman, and mutant on this planet shall know the truth about de-evolution, or "devolution" if you prefer. General Boy and son, Booji are here to inform us that the mission of devolution is a serious matter. Disease is punishment. Reductive synthesis—we do it all for you. Be like your ancestors, or be different, it doesn't matter. See DEVO battle evil record producers Rod Rooter and Daddy Know-it-All. Witness the ahead-of-their-time videos and awesome concert footage. Songs included on this include "Come Back Jonee," "Wiggly World," "Satisfaction," "Secret Agent Man," "Jocko Homo," and more. Man, it would be really great to see these guys in a small venue (especially 20 years ago!). Henry Rollins once proclaimed that there are two kinds of people in the world: Those who get Devo, and those who don't. I have a feeling you wouldn't be reading HIAMB if you didn't get them. So get this. Got that?

**Dead Kennedys—The Early Years Live** (Music Video Distributors DR-1097/2001/30 minutes)

I love the DK. From the sometimes painful-to-watch weird stage antics of Jello Biafra (mime acting and spastic motions), to a hilarious San Francisco news piece on Jello's notorious candidacy for mayor (in which he finished fourth!), every minute of this home video is worth its weight in gold, especially for diehard fans. The 30 minute DVD features this seminal punk band live from their early years at various venues including the Mabuhay Gardens, the Sproul Plaza at Berkeley and at Target Studios between 1978 through 1981. Much of the material is from the

essential debut LP *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables*. Songs: "California Uber Alles," "Kill the Poor," "Drug Me," "The Man with the Dogs," "Insight," "Let's Lynch the Landlord," "Bleed for Me," "Holiday in Cambodia," and "Viva Las Vegas." Special DVD features include a Karaoke-style sing-a-long option, band member biographies, Dolby Digital Stereo and a chapter search by songs. This Canadian import is some of the coolest, cleanest looking DK videos that I have seen and is a definite recommendation to anyone who even remotely enjoys the Dead Kennedys. MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456.

**Bauhaus—Shadow of Light** (Beggars Banquet/1984/40 minutes)

Very picturesque and wonderful cinematography greatly compliment the music and imagery of these (dare I say) godfathers of gothic rock. This collection of nine videos defiantly creates landscapes in the mind, an effect worthy of the label Bauhaus. It's all black clothing, mullets, and eye make-up from here on out my brothers and sisters. My personal favorites are "Bela Lugosi's Dead" and "In the Flat Field." Other songs included: "Telegram Sam," "Rose Garden/Funeral of Sores," "Mask," "Spirit," "Ziggy Stardust," "Hollow Hills," and "She's in Parties." Four of the videos were shot as live footage from The Old Vic in London 2/24/82, and all of the other songs are promo videos.

**The Sore Losers** (BIGBROADGUERRILLAMONSTER/1997)  
"They wanted meat, so they ate the flower children."

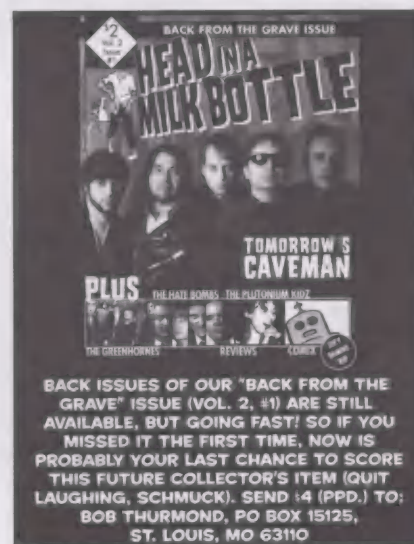
Set in present day Northeastern Mississippi and Memphis, this is a movie that's not quite as concerned with plot as it is in being shot in the style of '50s/'60s exploitation films with nods to garage rock and underground comics. An EC Comics-reading space alien, Blackie (Jack Oblivian), is given a second chance to return to earth and complete his unsuccessful 1954 mission of killing 12 beatniks. He immediately dispatches a store clerk who badmouths Weir Science and thus begins the orgiastic blood bath of horror. Blackie rejoins his previous earth companion, the juvenile delinquent Mike Maker, who seems to possess supernatural powers. Along the way, they become involved with a psycho hippie killing ex-con Kerine (Kerine Elkins) and an amazon circus sideshow performer, "Go-Go Goliatha" D'Lana (D'Lana Tunnell). Japanese noiseably punks Guitar Wolf are the beer-guzzling, eye laser-shooting, 'FBI' from outer space Men In Black whose true motives are questionable. Check out the 'Knight Rider' light on their auto. They capture D'Lana and sentence her to death for the crimes The Sore Losers committed! Needless to say, chaos ensues. Exploitation King David F. Friedman (in his first role in 25 years) is the space master elder who demands that Blackie kill D'Lana when Kerine kills a 13th victim (her mom, played by Ghetty Chasun), screwing up Blackie's mission. After a while I found myself asking, "What the hell is going on here?" This somewhat confusing story twists and turns, but also covers enough depravity and insanity to please even the most jaded viewer: zombies, angels, Schlitz beer, x-ray specs, topless catfights, lesbian toe sucking, female masturbation with a Vault of Horror comic, rock'n'roll, automobiles, and the death penalty. My favorite scenes are of an alien who opens fire on a hippie party, and the hippie-killing humor, "Q: What's the difference between a hippie and an onion? A: You don't cry so much when you cut a hippie." Awesome. This film ends with blood squirting on hippies making a dope deal and then a big explosion. Why you ask? Because you're a loser! (www.bigbroad.com)

**Scrapbook** (Wicked Pixel Cinema/1999)

Based on actual events. Leonard (Tommy Biondo), your friendly neighborhood serial killer, has abducted his latest victim, Clara (Emily Haack). She is raped, humiliated, tortured, and forced to write about her ordeal in Leonard's scrapbook. Leonard believes that his scrapbook will bring him fame and fortune; he fantasizes about having a movie contract and being on Jerry Springer. Leonard's hands are filthy. His home is filthy—encrusted with rotting food and empty Stag beer cans. There is a wall filled with Polaroid pictures. There are splattered bloodstains everywhere. In general this is a very ugly film; it made me feel dirty watching it. Even the soundtrack is unsettling. This is one sadistic flick, one of the most brutal sleazefests that I have seen in years (and that's saying a lot). The violence is not glorified, but treated in a harsh, realistic manner. Some of the torture inflicted upon Clara (and a young Leonard) is hard to watch. Thankfully there are people like Biondo, Haack, and director Stanze who have the balls to create such a groundbreaking film. (www.wickedpixel.com)

**Lust for Frankenstein** 1998 (European Version) 87 minutes

Director Jesus Franco once again makes a wonderful addition to the Frankenstein saga (remember *The Erotic Rites of Frankenstein*, 1972?). Franco, a prolific filmmaker of the past four or so decades has made literally hundreds of films: Women in prison, horror, and general sleaze are his specialty. Available on DVD with both versions and extra features at a dirt-cheap price, this should be an addition to any collectors who value the nasty side of video. Aging vamp and Franco favorite, Lina Romay is Moria Frankenstein, who is haunted by bloody visions of her father, Dr. Frankenstein. She finds her father's creation, named Goddess (American scream queen Michelle Bauer) and reanimates it. Goddess, who is naked except for gold combat boots, exclaims in her raspy voice, "Help me and I will show you the way to ecstasy." Moria readily agrees and the monster woman/lesbian action begins. The mature but sexy Moria is too horny and must have sex with others, but Goddess is enraged by the affairs of the flesh and kills anyone who may try to seduce her master. What's great about this film is that it matters not that the plot is minimal, and the thick accents are nearly impossible to follow, it is merely an all out attack on the senses. An overload of insane color, visual effects and rock music (some written by Franco himself), tons of nudity and near-X-rated sex scenes make this film a true sensual experience. Listen for The Ubangi's "Ubangi Stomp." A definite must for HIAMB readers.



BACK ISSUES OF OUR "BACK FROM THE GRAVE" ISSUE (VOL. 2, #1) ARE STILL AVAILABLE, BUT GOING FAST! SO IF YOU MISSED IT THE FIRST TIME, NOW IS PROBABLY YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SCORE THIS FUTURE COLLECTOR'S ITEM (QUIT LAUGHING, SCHMUCK). SEND \$4 (PPD.) TO: BOB THURMOND, PO BOX 15125, ST. LOUIS, MO 63110



**My** neighbor Rodney's an amicable guy. He's a little splashy and queer as a \$3 bill, but he has a magnetic personality that's both humorous and kind if you're on his good side, vicious and mocking if you're unfortunate enough to get on his bad side. Well-suited to the environment, he makes a living as the assistant manager at Club St. Louis, one local link in the national chain of men-only bathhouses posing as health clubs. Rodney adds a sense of flair and whimsy to a place that can only be described nicely as unusually primal and mundane, greeting his regular patrons with a ribbing condescension and a hearty "fuck you." Everybody loves him. He's become an ornate fixture in another enduring den of iniquity.

Nestled on Samuel Shepherd in a sparse area just down the road from the A.G. Edwards conglomerate, the Club has cleaned up its act nicely over the years. Decades ago, and before the notorious crackdown on the San Francisco baths, it used to be a run-of-the-mill, seedy whorehouse, maintaining a steady clientele cultivated from the gay underground. There was even a sadomasochism dungeon room that you could only enter by being skinny enough to slip through the crevice in the wall it hid behind. Such fringe benefits disappeared when righteousness reared its obstinate head and took notice. The place became a bit more subdued. In an effort to re-vamp the image, there grew an extensive gym and workout area, a swimming pool, a hot tub, showers, a steam room, a vending and video room, a plush TV room, and a large gathering room with a pit area and a fireplace. These are all facade and backdrop, however. The heart of the



institution is the multi-use walk-in closet, cubicle-sized rooms that extend off the beaten path in mazes of dark exterior hallways. Such "personal changing areas" consist of nothing more than a particleboard base off to the side with enough room for an ashtray and a plastic-covered, thin mattress that wouldn't even make a camping cot jealous. VIP rooms garner a higher price and offer a little more square footage along with pornos piped in 24 hours a day on a television monitor placed in the corner of the ceiling. Aside from the rooms, the amenities are flattering. But rest assured, the Club is about one thing and one thing only: sex, and plenty of it.

I drop by the Club on occasion to hang out with Rodney in the back office and chew the fat. I also stop by once in a while to see my pal Sean, who as the director of outreach at St. Louis Effort For AIDS and chair of the St. Louis AIDS Community Planning Group, sets up a prevention table in the pit area on Tuesday evenings. (locker special, one of the Club's busiest nights) From these experiences, I had an idea of what went on there, albeit safely behind the scenes. Rodney jokingly gave me a pass a long time ago to check out the facilities as a customer sometime. It was a polite gesture, although the pass stayed hidden in my wallet for some time, frayed and worn, until about a month ago when I was looking for a new freak show to write about.

In an effort to witness the full effect, I elected Tuesday night again to participate. The special fee on lockers is in itself still outrageous but discounted enough to bring in many of the more frugal types. A passbook and a locker are the cheapest way to go here if you're a regular. You at least have to rent a locker to enter the premises. Otherwise, figure on spending about \$30 for a one-time membership and a room. An assortment of lubes, cock rings, and toiletries are also available, but for an exorbitant price. Like candy at a movie or popcorn at a ball game, I would highly recommend customers bring their own accessories before they step in.

When I drove up, the parking lot was full and cars lined the street outside the building. I entered the premises, sustained Rodney's inquisitive teasing, and checked myself in, placing my valuables in a lock box behind the counter. The door buzzed open, and for the first time, I walked into the main area with an odd sense of trepidation facing what was beyond. Most customers walk around the place in nothing but a white towel. Some are bold enough to strut around in their birthday suits without a hint of modesty. I didn't quite feel comfortable enough to dress (or undress) the part yet, so I spent about a half-hour in the gym pitting my lycanthropic muscles against various Nautilus equipment. In a matter of vacuous time, I began to get antsy, so I decided to finally muster up the courage and join the masses. I changed at my locker and wrapped the towel snugly around my

waist. When in Rome, and not unlike a toga now that I think about it. Walking down the hallways, the theme was plain to see. Unless someone is getting down to business or out cruising around, most doors to the rooms stay open. Hell, even when the guys were getting down to business, the doors were open in a few cases. It literally is a meat market, with several customers on display in their booths masturbating, air-pumping their cocks, or thrusting their butts up in the air with unbridled anticipation. Witnessing these events and the bug-eyed stares of lust beaming from the other shoppers (Sean affectionately refers to this as "pedophile eyes"), part of me was honored, but a much larger part of me was irrationally getting sick to my stomach.

I walked out to go for a swim and escape. The quaint pool is heated and enclosed in a comfortable, outdoor deck setting by a tall wooden fence. Gallantly jumping in, I ignored the translucent layer of suntan oil and who knows what else floating over the top of the water. An elderly man came out, sat down on one of the lounge chairs surrounding the pool, and began masturbating at a furious rate. Thankfully, he had his eye on some other fellows across the way, but still it was awkward enough for me to get out and move on. You see a lot of older folks there, by the way, which I guess is understandable. In younger gay circles, hitting 30 catapults you over the hill and reaching 40 gets you a discount on cab fare to the retirement home. You're pushing 50 on the bar scene? You might as well forget about it. Take your expired bragging rights and haul your wrinkled, flat ass

far up his ass that he had to have an ambulance called to the scene. Rodney also talked about another patron who sets up shop in his room on a regular basis. This guy spreads out an array of dildos along the floor, puts up a donation bucket and a sign that reads "do whatever you want", and then advances to quite professionally tie himself up in his own harness with his legs placed high above his head. Sean said that people come in and hit him with the dildos or take the largest one they can find and mercilessly shove it in just to piss the wierdo off. And speaking of piss, there's a different fetishist who makes a habit of peeing all over the steam room because he likes to mess around in the scent of his own urine. I didn't mention that I had just come from there, although that story did score myself a mental note to pay special attention to my feet when I arrived home later to shower. After a little more chatter, I thanked Rodney for his hospitality and made my way out quickly to get a breath of fresh air. Back to reality, so to speak.

There are a 100 or more mindsets walking into that place on a daily basis. I'm not about to play computer-chair psychologist trying to figure them all out. Although the majority of them stink like a shallow cesspool, above all, the Club is merely escapist fantasy material. Like myself, you may not agree with all of it, but you can't blame people for falling victim to their own desires, as extensively abhorrent as those may have become. I saw a TV show for the first time recently called *Taxicab Confessions*. One of the women being secretly filmed had this to say at the end of her story: "I like what I like, and what I don't like I can laugh at, so how can I lose?" Those are my sentiments exactly.

## Feeling Lonely? Join the Club! *by Deff Stryker*

over to the Club. The loose stringency makes for a fertile rest area. You also see a lot of hustlers too. Go figure.

Anyway, I walked into the jacuzzi area, and amazingly, the hot tub was not occupied, so I slipped in, once more neglecting what was potentially floating around inside. A couple of guys came by to take showers right next door behind a low, glass-brick divider, mildly playing with themselves and keeping that eagle eye out for potential victims. Two black men popped in and proceeded to enter the hot tub. They started getting frisky, so I got up again to finish my tour. Last stop, the steam room, which turns out to be a humid version of the dark room downstairs at Faces, a virtual orgy of indiscretion going on right before your very eyes. By that time, I'd seen quite enough.

More limp than Festus Haggen, I headed back to the lockers and changed back into my attire. I stuck around for a little while to talk to Sean and Rodney. On what appeared to be a typical abject evening,

Rodney was quick to share some old war stories that would put my visit to shame. Like the tale about the old man who lost control of his bowels and caroused the quarters, leaving a trail behind him like a long wick

The people that really rile me up are the Jerry Falwells of the world who have the audacity to preach that "liberal civil liberties groups, feminists, homosexuals and abortion rights supporters bear partial responsibility for [the World Trade Center and Pentagon] terrorist attacks because their actions have turned God's anger against America." Or the mini-Bushs with their convoluted pep talks and blatant disregard for separation of church and state. Or on a closer note, take the handfuls of neighborhoods that demandingly had AIDS prevention billboards torn down because of a photo of two black guys hugging or a picture of a condom. A fucking condom.

Cheers to the contributors of the terrorist victims. It's only one small cause. More people die of

AIDS every day. Global problems don't concern us, though, unless there's something to gain, and hell, our own problems don't even concern us half the time. With this ridiculous illusion of unity, propaganda, and patriotism, and this blinding veil of flags at every turn, I'd say we're a far cry from practicing what we're so proud to pat ourselves on the back for. This isn't humanity. It's an idealized conquest. Global, national, or in your own backyard, it's all bullshit. Let's face it, the real world has a pretty pungent stench of its own.

leading up to an explosive pile wherever he momentarily stood ground. That one started a chain reaction of vomiting amongst three different employees that day. Then there was the guy who shoved a rather colossal prosthetic so





**ERIC STANZE** is a 29-year-old St. Louis filmmaker who has been directing, producing, and/or editing feature movies, music videos, and experimental short subjects for the last ten years. He is the founder of his own production company, **Wicked Pixel Cinema**. Eric is very dedicated to the art of film and to expanding the limits of budgeted cinema.

Eric is also the creator of the *Severed Head Network*, a video collection showcasing the artistic talents of lesser-known filmmakers through experimental short subjects and music videos.

Mr. Stanze has been steadily gaining more (well deserved) recognition in the filmmaking community and we here at **HIAMB** are proud to share the gospel.

**HIAMB (Matt):** When and why did you decide to make films?

**Eric:** I don't believe I had a choice ... um, I was probably sixteen, or fifteen...? I started realizing I could do more than just mess around with the family camera—I could try to actually shoot things that were special F/X, or tell a story or something like that and it started growing on me.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** So it pretty much started with some experimentation?

**Eric:** Yeah, just putting the equipment in my hands and the rest of it happened naturally.

**HIAMB (Matt):** Was there an impetus besides the camera itself?

**Eric:** I think I started messing with it just because the equipment was there and I was bored. I didn't like any of the other ways that my parents suggested I spend my summer. So while they were interested in trying to make me go out and play sports I didn't like, I was much more interested in picking up the camera and doing stuff with it. I started really getting into horror movies and to think along the lines of actually making horror movies that looked like the ones that I was becoming a fan of. So it became a lot of me seeing *Dawn of the Dead* or Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* and movies like that and then you go, "Hey, I can make material that looks like that, too."

**HIAMB (Matt):** What was your first film like?

**Eric:** That was with my family's 8mm-film camera. A group of friends got together with me—and I was living in Pittsburgh at the time—and we made a film called *The Groundhog Day Massacre*. Two and a half minutes of people getting killed ... [HIAMB laughter.] The "plot" was that the killer walks toward the camera and he has a pin on that says "Happy Groundhog Day!" That was the extent of the motivation for a story and movie. From that point on, the killer just went around killing people. Now, for it being an early project there were actually a lotta special F/X in it, 'cause we showed a guy gettin' his head chopped off, a foot came off... uh, we used a buzzsaw on a girl's torso... for two and a half minutes, and it being something made by a buncha inexperienced kids, we actually loaded it with a lotta special F/X which ARE time-consuming ... on any budget level.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** No killer groundhog?

**Eric:** No actual groundhog. Just a fan of the day. Then we made another little thing called *The Vampire* and that was your typical guy gets killed, arises from the dead, is a bloodsucker, gets shot and it doesn't do anything to him, struggles, stake-in-the-heart and he's dead ... and all that took place on my parents front porch in Brighton Township, Pennsylvania.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Is that where you grew up?

**Eric:** I spent most of my grade school years in Herculaneum around here [Missouri]. Then after grade school I moved to Pittsburgh and then moved back and finished school here in Imperial, Mo. at Windsor High. Since I moved out of my parents' house, all of my apartments have been in the south St. Louis area, so I've been around here all my adult life.

# WICKED PIXEL CINEMA

ERIC STANZE  
INTERVIEWED BY  
MATT BUG  
AND  
BRYAN  
BENSON



**HIAMB (Bryan):** You mentioned Raimi and Romero. Do you have any other favorites that you emulate or draw inspiration from?

**Eric:** Growing up those were the two biggies. Those were the two that constantly fueled the fire to keep making horror movies or just odd non-mainstream movies ... a little bit of Cronenberg thrown in there... I'm embarrassed to admit that I really enjoyed *The Toxic Avenger* when I first saw it as a kid...

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Who didn't!

**Eric:** ...yeah, the head getting run over by the car—that's awesome. In fact, I think the one day of shooting that was used for *The Groundhog Day Massacre*—if I remember right—the whole cast and crew. We finished shooting our epic then we all went inside and we ate hot dogs and watched the unrated cut of *The Toxic Avenger*.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** For those who aren't familiar with your work, what medium do you shoot on? Is it mostly video?

**Eric:** We shoot on whatever we can afford at the time and that is mostly done video. We've tried very hard to stay away from the most common consumer-type stuff. There's one movie out there that was released to the public, which was shot on consumer video. That was the first thing that I released called *The Scare Game*. But everything after that, we've tried to go up to a broadcast-quality level of production, but it's still video so it's not like we're spending a ton of money. And then *Ice from the Sun* was shot on super8mm film, so that's our one film project.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Yeah, I noticed in watching some of them, it seemed like you used a mix.

**Eric:** We tried manipulating the film in lots of ways on *Ice from the Sun*—scratching the film, over-saturation, etc.—to give it a distinctive look. There's also a process called "filmlook" that we've used quite often and that's an effect that's done in transfer. It's something that helps the audience realize that, "hey, we're not watchin' some consumer-grade crap here," and it's fairly convincing.

**HIAMB (Matt):** Picasso had his "Blue Period." How would you describe your "Bob Harrison Period?"

**Eric:** [Laughter then groans] It was "video boot camp." When I was Bob's intern at Jefferson College, I learned a lot, but it was like being crucified on a daily basis. One positive thing did result from being screamed at and called names day in and day out: it thickened my hide. Now, when these Hollywood wannabe assholes try to intimidate me by being aggressive, abrasive, loud, or whatever, it just doesn't work. Thanks to Bob, it is pretty much impossible to scare me. I also think that—at the time—Jefferson had the best hands-on training available for video production in the St. Louis area. I've talked and worked with people who were students at other colleges in the area—including Webster—and all of them pale in comparison. They can't believe the stuff we were allowed to do there.

**HIAMB (Matt):** What's your favorite type of demon?

**Eric:** [Laughs.] Um... see, you're supposed to give me these questions in advance so I can come up with something clever! Um, [in professional artist tone] personal demons that you have to exorcise by working hard and...

**HIAMB (Matt):** Aw, c'mon, you're turning all artsy fartsy...

**Eric:** [Laughter.] Yeah, artsy fartsy demons.

**HIAMB (Matt):** How about favorite scary monster or entity.

**Eric:** Hmmm, if you're going for an entity, it would have to be the force that does the scary damage in *The Changeling*. The ghost in that movie is the scariest horror movie villain I've ever seen.



**HIAMB (Bryan):** Is that the one where the ghost is the kid in the wheelchair?

**Eric:** Mmm-hmm. It's a VERY creepy movie.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Do you have any movies that you saw when you were a kid that really scared you besides *The Changeling*?

**Eric:** *The Changeling* was the scary one that really freaked me out. I remember *The Amityville Horror* freaked me out. Jaws THOROUGHLY freaked me out. It was ridiculous. In my bedroom where there's [heightens voice] no ocean... and I was still scared of sharks. On the second floor of a house in Herculaneum, Missouri, I was worried about sharks. That's how ridiculous it was.

**HIAMB (Matt):** How much education do you have in the field of Demonology?

**Eric:** None... UNLESS you count the Bible. Because, while I am an agnostic individual, I turn to the Bible for quite a bit of research and story ideas. A lot. I'm currently working on a screenplay that is heavy in the biblical back story and I'm reading the Bible more than I've ever read in my life and I'm trying very hard to make this movie—which has a biblical reference seemingly every five pages—as bizarre as possible but completely, biblically accurate. There's weirdness beyond belief in this movie—even time travel—and it all ties back to the Bible. So, for research purposes, the Bible.

**HIAMB (Matt):** Which version?

**Eric:** Various. Sometimes I'll hit on a passage, so just to make sure I know what's going on with this passage, I'll ask other people to show me the same passage in other Bibles just to make sure it will still fit depending on the version.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Would you consider your films or ideas sacrilegious in any way?

**Eric:** Personally, no, because I'm agnostic. But also, because there are a lotta guys that work on my movies that are very into their faith and they've come up against that by working on these movies. They just look at it as a mind-opening type thing... It makes them look at something from a different direction. They've told me it, in a sense, strengthens their faith.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Yeah, I noticed that sometimes in the credits there are special thanks to God.

**Eric:** Jason Christ is a very talented director here in town and I've worked with him consistently from movie to movie and he's worked on many of my projects. He's one of these folks who's a very devoted Christian guy that always puts God in his special thanks. He's not offended by my movies at all and he's one of the open-minded Christian folk that makes me think I'm not offending people just for the sake of offending people. To my experience, I've found that the only people that get offended are very narrow or closed-minded Christians.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** There's another name that appears a lot in the credits and that's Biondo...

**Eric:** Tommy Biondo. He co-wrote, co-executive-produced, and starred in *Scrapbook*, a project that he developed and brought to me. He was involved in everything I ever did. He was usually an actor, and if he wasn't an actor he was some kinda behind-the-scenes person. He ended up doing production design and acting in *Ice from the Sun* and then brought *Scrapbook* to me and asked me if I wanted to make it our next Wicked Pixel Cinema movie and that was his baby. He's one of those high school pals that was involved from the very beginning. No matter what I did, he was right there ready to do whatever.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** So is he really totally psycho? [Laughing] How much of that was acting?

**Eric:** He's... well, first of all, on a slightly downer note, it was beginning of August of 1999 when I finished editing *Scrapbook*. We shot it and then it had to sit on the shelf basically for a year because I didn't have time to edit it. Then I edited the movie and right as soon as I was done editing it, Tom was in an accident and he died. So he's not with us anymore. And, ya know, the biggest tragedy of that is that he never got to see *Scrapbook*, which is a movie that he'd worked on for years. He'd spent, like, five years of research before he ever brought it to me. And then it was

months of pre-production, a couple months of shooting, a year waiting for it to edit, a month of me editing and ... he died. He didn't get to see the movie.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** That is a tragedy.

**Eric:** Yes. And he was a very talented guy and also probably one of the biggest contributors to the St. Louis film scene—and, ya know, I knew the kid since he was fifteen. We were very, very close. He's probably the closest thing to a son I'll ever have, 'cause I don't plan on havin' chillins, so it was a tragedy to me personally for those obvious reasons, but for the St. Louis film/video community, everybody lost a good artist.



**HIAMB (Matt):** I saw him on-screen before I met him in person. I can't remember which film. Probably *Scare Game*? Did he play a surgeon in *Scare Game*?

**Eric:** Yeah, he was in *Scare Game*. He played a mad scientist.

**HIAMB (Matt):** After the film, I remember asking you, "Who's THAT guy? He's great!" Then finally I met him in person.

**Eric:** And he was a weird guy in real life...

**HIAMB (Matt):** He was just an energy ball...

**Eric:** Yeah, very hyper.

**HIAMB (Matt):** Pretty sharp mentally, but he also had the physical side to go with it as an actor. Always eager to do crazy stunts. All it took was a dare or less—

**Eric:** [Laughs] Yeah, half a dare!

**HIAMB (Matt):** —to get him to jump through a wall or whatever.

**Eric:** So in answer to your question about *Scrapbook*, no, he's nowhere near the psycho in the movie. In *Scrapbook* he wasn't just an actor. He also did production design and he was a producer, too, supervising the whole thing all the way through as we shot it. It was really interesting to watch him work at that moment in *Scrapbook* because he was the most mature I'd ever seen him. He was kind of in a business mode of a "Eric, we need to sit down and discuss this so I make sure I know what's going on so I can fulfill my duties" type of guy, and then the moment the camera was rolling he DROPS into character—and he's a psycho—and then on cut, he's back to being either very business-like, like "Let's get this movie done" or he's a goof cracking jokes and cuttin' up and trying to make the actress and everyone else on the set more relaxed. He snapped in and out of that character very easily.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** That's good. That's really a sign of good acting.

**Eric:** I agree. Sometimes Tom would try to do the method thing and stay in character the entire day, but he's played some weird roles and I could see that he'd be exhausted 'bout halfway through the day. Finally he'd be like, y'know, "Fuck it. I'm gonna eat a granola bar and enjoy the rest of the day." He was a cool guy.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Do you have a favorite film?

**Eric:** I think my favorite non-horror movie is *Apocalypse Now*, which means I'm very close to running out and seeing the new version. I think my favorite horror movies would be—I don't know if I like them because I like them, or if I like them because of how influential they were on me when I was younger—but probably *Dawn of the Dead*, *The Evil Dead*, probably *The Changeling*, and probably Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, too. Just pretty much the classics—*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*—the ones that really nailed it on the head and did horror movies right.

**HIAMB (Matt):** How about worst movies?

**Eric:** So bad I enjoyed them or so bad I was mad I saw them?

**HIAMB (Matt):** Both.

**Eric:** The last movie that made me outraged that I spent the money and more outraged that someone ELSE had \$80 million to make it was *The Mummy*. That movie was terrible and I was mad they had that kind of a budget and I'm living on 45 cents a month to make my movies. That movie made me PISSED. So that was a not-fun bad movie. Probably the best bad movie was a little low-budget thing called *Saurians* which tried to be *Jurassic Park*, but on a \$200 budget, and it's hysterical. A lotta fun. It's really underground. I talked to the guy that directed it [Mark Polonia] right around the time that *Savage Harvest* was coming out and he and I were swapping horror stories about our movies and I come to find out that he's a big Wicked Pixel/Eric Stanze fan and he has our movie posters all over his office—

**HIAMB (Matt):** Which is an insurance sales office?

**Eric:** [Laughs] I have no idea what he does for a living—but I tried to tell him, "Ya know, we've got a buncha fans here in St. Louis for your movie. We all LOVE *Saurians*." [Laughter.] And he has this sorta Northeastern drawl and when I say that to him, he says, [with Northeastern drawl] "Yeah, but fore awl tha rowng reeeasons." [Much laughter from all, including the corpse which is leaning against the wall.]

**Eric:** There are a lotta good bad movies out there—*The Stuff*, from the early eighties.

**HIAMB (Bryan):** Killer Yogurt...

**Eric:** Yeah, *Killer Yogurt*—how insane is that! That's a stupid, fun movie. I like *Evil Spawn*—that's a crappy *Alien*-type thing, giant bug movie. Lots of good bad movies. We'll sit down and watch three or four in a night, sometimes, if we wanna get a good movie party going.

**HIAMB (Matt):** What's your recipe for blood?

**Eric:** What I started with was Dick Smith's recipe, which I read in *Cinemagic* or something like that, so I started with that and ... I tried making it for our early movies and it looked terrible. There was one ingredient that was some kinda chemical that I didn't have access to and it looked terrible. It wasn't until a movie or two later that I realized that dishwashing detergent could take the place of that chemical. And then our blood started looking really good. Now each movie we do, we perfect the blood recipe little bit by little bit. So we keep changing it slightly. So it's basically Dick Smith's recipe plus five layers of refinement. We sorta finish up each movie and we say, [with hand rubbing chin], "Eh, it was a little dark" or, "That was a little bright," "It didn't quite run right," "It looked a little glassy."

**HIAMB (Bryan):** I was at Johnny Brock's earlier tonight and a gallon of fake blood was \$70!

**Eric:** Yeah, the stuff in stores is good for very specific purposes, but in general we don't like it. It's a little too thick and a little too dark.



**HIAMB (Matt): What's a gallon of blood go for these days?**

**Eric:** I can't remember what it would be broken down per gallon, but I know that to buy the ingredients for all the blood that we used in *Ice from the Sun* was about a \$600 purchase? \$700 purchase? We spent a few hundred.

**HIAMB (Matt): Worst fake blood you ever saw on film?**

**Eric:** Unfortunately, it would have to be *Dawn of the Dead*. 'Cause while the effects were really cool in that movie and the movie itself was really well done, Tom Savini went out and I think he said he bought the blood instead of making it. It just had way too much of a bright orange paint look to it. It's a shame, 'cause it's one of my favorite horror movies of all time. Just turn the color down and watch it in black and white.

**HIAMB (Bryan): Are you getting a lot of foreign interest in your movies?**

**Eric:** Recently, yes—to the point where—when *Scrapbook* was released, we got immediate response from overseas, specifically France, Spain and Germany. Now it's to the point that we're getting enough of a fan base overseas that our distributor in New York is getting foreign distributors to invest money. So for the first time in my life, I've actually got some deals going on where people are putting in money just because my name's attached to the project, which is kinda nice. It would be nicer if it would be more financially lucrative, 'cause it's gettin' the movies made, but it's not giving me a whole lotta cash. It's still nice that somebody from a country that I'll never be able to afford to visit is spending their money helping me make movies.

**HIAMB (Matt): What's the title of the film you're working on now?**

**Eric:** Welp, let me back up a little bit on that. This is for a line of movies called Sub Rosa Extreme that a distributor in New York is putting out. They aren't intended as prestige pieces. They are super-cheap, very violent, and they have a lot of sexual content. Your classic American exploitation movie. And I took on the directing chores of one of 'em called, *I Spit on Your Corpse*, *I Piss on Your Grave*. It's such a long title I have a hard time memorizing it. And this is essentially my first director-for-hire job, where someone else has approached me and said, "If you come aboard, we think we can get overseas financing. Will you make this movie?" And I looked at it as a way to make a buck and still doing something that was fun. When I first went into this movie ... [pauses for thought] ... *I Spit on Your Corpse*, *I Piss on Your Grave*, I originally entered this project thinking, "I'll just shoot it quick'n'dirty, get it done. If it sucks, I slap a pseudonym on it and it's no big deal." We got into shooting and it was a BLAST. It was so much fun to shoot. All the pressure was gone. There was no pressure to be dramatic. There was no pressure to be artsy. It was like, "How sleazy and sick can we make this movie?" And it was an absolute blast. Jeremy Wallace was producing with me. Emily Haack came in from LA to play the lead role. I got a bunch of new actors involved in this and I explained what we were doing and everybody thought, "That sounds like a lot of fun. Let's make this sleazy masterpiece."

**HIAMB (Bryan): With a great title!**

**Eric:** The distributor handed me the title. But I'm okay with it 'cause it sounds like a sleazy '70s horror exploitation movie. Now I'm very excited with it and now I'm gonna be pretty happy to put my name on it because we just made this sort of dizzying, surreal, carnival of carnage thing and it was so much fun shooting it and coming up with this sick stuff to put in it and it actually has created what I think is gonna turn into a pretty cool little cult classic type movie. Just because it's so bizarre and it's so offensive to mainstream audiences...

**HIAMB (Bryan): Stop it, you're getting me excited!**

**Eric:** So that's the project we're working on. We've got one day left out of our vast eight-day shooting schedule, which is a record for us because *Scrapbook* was shot in thirteen days and we thought we were pretty hot shit for getting that done that quick.

**HIAMB (Bryan): What's The Severed Head Network?**

**Eric:** The Severed Head Network is a compilation of experimental short films. This first volume contains

only Midwest directors. Jeremy Wallace and I produced this compilation to show off talented, non-mainstream filmmakers. It is often very hard for a director to get his short film seen by the world, so we compiled eleven shorts that are currently shocking the world on home video.

**HIAMB (Bryan): Could you maybe describe some problems with filmmaking in St. Louis?**

**Eric:** It's two-fold. In this town, people have very specific ideas about how movies should be made and if you operate outside of that very narrow guideline—'cause around here, you either have to have rich parents or some other way of financing a \$300 thousand 16mm film and if you can't do that, then don't make your movie at all. That's the mentality of St. Louis. It's even so narrow-minded that in this town, you have to use the same people over and over again as your crew. If you don't work with this guy as your gaffer and this guy as your grip and this guy as your producer or pick from these four guys as your production



manager, then you're doing it wrong. It's just a very narrow mentality. Add to that the fact that I actually *enjoy* making movies that are typically very offensive to mainstream audiences. Just from a content standpoint—it doesn't matter what kind of budget or what kind of crew I have—most people in St. Louis don't want to come near us because the content is so offensive to them. In most cases I find the people in this town get offended by really silly stuff, so my mentality is put it all on there, do whatever the hell I want, and if it means people in St. Louis don't like my work then they don't like my work.

**HIAMB: Are there any other filmmakers around this town that you would like to tip your hat to? Anyone else doing work in the same vein?**

**Eric:** Not in the same way I am. There's no one in town making feature length movies that actually get released to the public. There are some very, VERY good DIRECTORS in town—a handful of guys that I do admire a lot. One of them is Doveed Linder who just finished a feature-length film called *Defiance*, which is a well-made mainstream western that I worked on. That movie ended up being really good. And he just finished a short film based on a Stephen King novel and shot on 35mm that I had a bit part in as an actor. And I admire Doveed a lot, 'cause it seems from what limited contact I've had with him, he seems to be a very good director and, more importantly, he's a good guy. He's got a really good sense of humor and he's not an egomaniac. To me, he seems very cool. There are other guys in town doing small projects shot on film or video, but they differ in that none of their movies have been released. Whereas I'm in a good position now, where if I make a movie it gets released. It's cool that we've got a global fan base for our stuff. It's not a high saturation, first of all, because my stuff isn't mainstream, so it's not gonna get a lotta viewers, and secondly, I'm not a good enough director to get people all over the world interested in what I do. I still have a lot to learn in being a director. My stuff

ultimately just ain't that good and isn't going to warrant a huge amount of people all over the planet watching my movies. But the people that like what they're seeing are telling their friends and they're telling their friends and now, though it's not a high saturation of fans, we do have a fan base that covers the globe. And that makes it a little easier to make movies in St. Louis, because it makes it easier to say, "Who cares if people in St. Louis like my work?"

**HIAMB (Bryan): So is there anyone you would like to give a "fuck off" to?**

**Eric:** In St. Louis? Honestly, very few. Even people that don't like what I do have always been very cool to me. There have been only a half dozen people who've been dickheads and I've found that they're mostly people that have talked their whole lives about making movies, never actually did it or did it with any level of success, and they assume that I'm gonna have an ego and they get jealous and so they hit me with a strong offense right off the bat. I've tried to walk away from these people, but they tend to shove it in my face about how cool they are and how much I suck. And half a dozen individuals in town have done that to me. I'd like to give them a big "fuck off," but ... I won't name names. That's not professional.

**HIAMB (Bryan): See, usually I have a problem with stuff that's shot on video. But when I saw your films, I was like, "Wow." I was really amazed.**

**Eric:** Well, normally I do, too, because it's usually people making their first or second movie or it's guys that don't have a lot of education or experience and it ends up being a crappy movie. But eventually if you watch enough movies that are \$80 million epics or \$2000 shot-on-video cheapies, you learn that across the board the percentage of movies that suck is the same. I used to think the shot-on-video stuff was worse, but I've just watched enough of the stuff to realize there's some really cool stuff out there; a lot of directors across the country. There's a guy named Rich Anasky who lives in Florida and he just finished a shot-on-video movie called, *I Am Vengeance*, and it looks FANTASTIC. Then there's other directors like Scooter McCrae, who did a movie called *Shatter Dead* which was brilliant. Not to mention other directors like J.R. Bookwalter. People who go out and make shot-on-video movies and are actually *trying* to make real movies and not just, ya know, whip off something to make a quick buck and not give a shit about it.

**HIAMB (Bryan): I guess—like you said—before, I was a little prejudiced because usually the mentality of shot-on-video movies is pretty low. Usually those people don't know what they're doing. But then there's people like Jeffrey Arsenault, who did *Red Spirit Lake* and *We Await*...**

**Eric:** The shot-on-video stuff, you know it'll suck if you're just trying to make a buck and it'll be good to a certain degree if you just care. I don't have enough experience to make really good movies, and I don't think I have quite enough talent to make a movie that you would look at and say, "Now *that* is a really good movie." But I think that I've been one of the maybe half a dozen guys in the country that has elevated the status of the shot-on-video movie because I actually care about it and I'm TRYING to make the best movie I can. That can make all the difference in the world. I think early on I got a lotta credit, not so much because they were good flicks, but just because people were like, "Hey, this guy actually tried to do something with this little shot-on-video project," and people weren't used to seeing that much time and effort... So, what I lack in talent, I make up with in...

**HIAMB (Matt): Good old hard work.**

**Eric:** Yeah... hard work, passion, blood, sweat, and tears.

**HIAMB (Bryan): Do you have any tips for people who want to make movies but haven't?**

**Eric:** Yeah. It ain't a one-man show. So surround yourself with good people. And if you get good people that can produce with you, and good actors that are dedicated, and guys that are good with the lighting, and guys that are good with the special FX, and guys that are good with the music, you end up with a finished movie first of all—'cause most people who start a movie don't finish it—and then second of all, it exists on all those different layers and you aren't a



guy that wrote a great script but shot it like shit and it sounds like shit 'cause nobody else would come aboard. So the first thing is surrounding yourself with good people, and I've been EXTREMELY fortunate in that area. I've had the coolest people come out and join me on this ride. I think another thing is, if you *really* wanna do this, if you really wanna make movies, you should put aside those thoughts of being Joe Cool at Sundance and decide that for the next ten years you're gonna starve. So shut up, deal with it, and make your flick.

**HIAMB (Matt):** What are your future plans?

**Eric:** Finish this side project [pauses again to think], / *Spit on Your Corpse, I Piss on Your Grave*... [Laughter.] We've made fun of the title since we started, so it's been "I Piss on Your Car, I Spit on Your Hamburger," etc. But it's a side project for us. It was a fun distraction, but I certainly don't consider it my next movie. I'm currently working on a script called, *Tempest of the Dawn*, which is much bigger than anything we've ever done, and as soon as I'm finished with it later this year, my first step will be to aggressively pursue more financing than we've had on past projects. Then when I don't get that budget, I'm going to redesign how I'm going to shoot it to shoot it on a lower budget and eventually get the movie made. These Sub Rosa Extreme titles are probably a good icebreaker for me though, because of the overseas interest. I think if I do a good job with these and *Ice* and *Scrapbook* continue doing well over there, I can probably get some overseas financing for *Tempest of the Dawn* from those same companies that are currently showing interest in my projects.

**HIAMB (Matt):** Do you plan to shoot in the St. Louis area again?

**Eric:** Absolutely.

**HIAMB (Matt):** Do you know what medium you're going to be using for the film?

**Eric:** When I go after the financing I want, my budget's going to show that we're shooting on 16mm. Then when I don't get that budget, I'm going to re-write everything to where it can be shot on super8.

**HIAMB (Matt):** [Laughing.] You're already planning to be shot down?

**Eric:** Already planning my defeat. I'd like it to at least be shot on super8. We did *Ice from the Sun* on super8 and I was very happy with the way super8 looked and I was unhappy with the transfer. I think I can shoot another movie on super8 and make it look a lot better. I'm gonna take those bits and pieces that I learned on *Ice* and apply that newfound knowledge and make this movie a lot—not "better," 'cause I think *Ice* looks the way it should look—but make it look more appropriate for the new project.

**HIAMB (Matt):** If you could meet Satan and ask him one question, what would it be?

**Eric:** I'd probably just say, "Okay, you know all these movies I made topside—that really didn't get your attention, did it?" Just to make sure I'm off the hook.



## Gory props keep officers guessing

BY PAUL HAMPEL

Of the Post-Dispatch

One man's art is another's 911 call.

Police learned that lesson Tuesday after responding to a report of a torso in a trash can and a blood trail leading to Eric Stanze's back door in the 5500 block of Alaska Street. Stanze let officers inside and they found a home festooned with decapitated heads, disemboweled corpses and other mutilated body parts — all of them movie props made of plastic or papier-mâché and covered in fake blood.

Police found Stanze's handiwork so convincing that they called the medical examiner to investigate the scene just to be sure they hadn't uncovered the lair of a serial killer. "I tell you, the guy was good," said one officer, who declined to be named. "He had the body parts in plastic bags, and there was (fake) blood dripping down the side of the Dumpster."

Stanze, 29, has directed and produced independent horror videos for almost 10 years. The cover of his latest straight-to-video shocker, "Scrapbook," displays a fiend with a straight razor torturing a woman chained to a wall. "My movies are generally frowned upon by the masses," drawled the somber Stanze. With his shaved pate and deep, dark eyes, he looks a little like the heavy in one of his own movies.

Maybe that's what had the cops going Tuesday.

The first pair of patrolmen knocked on Stanze's door at 8:30 a.m.

"I went around back, and there were flies buzzing around the Dumpster," Stanze said. "I could see how the cops could mistake it for a real crime scene." Minutes later, the officers left laughing, convinced it was all a misunderstanding.

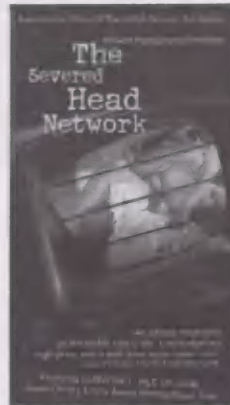
Then, 20 minutes later, more police arrived demanding further explanations.

Finally, the medical examiner showed up. She pulled on her latex gloves and examined the counterfeit corpse.

"By this time, all the cops were joking about it," Stanze said. "But not the medical examiner. She never cracked a smile or said a word. She just glared at me and then left — to cover a real crime, I guess."

Reporter Paul Hampel: E-mail: phampel@post-dispatch.com/Phone: 314-340-8115  
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# WICKED PIXEL CINEMA FILMOGRAPHY:



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A compilation of experimental short films and videos about sex, death, and rock 'n' roll! Hallucinogenic, aggressive, and completely offensive to mainstream audiences!



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VHS, DVD, December 1999

Surreal, violent, disturbing, chaotic. Eric Stanze's dangerously experimental punk art film. Not for the closed-minded, squeamish, or easily offended.

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VHS, June 1995

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## ERIC STANZE'S BLOOD RECIPE

Our blood recipe is being constantly tweaked as we evaluate its performance movie to movie... Here is how it is right now:

2 QTS KARO SYRUP

5 OZ RED FOOD COLOR

1 OZ YELLOW FOOD COLOR

HALF OZ GREEN FOOD COLOR (ADD A LITTLE AT A TIME UNTIL COLOR LOOKS RIGHT)

4 OZ LIQUID DETERGENT

4 OZ COFFEE

5 TABLESPOONS NON DAIRY COFFEE CREAMER (MIXED INTO THE COFFEE)

1 TABLESPOON FLOUR

(Will make a little over a half gallon.)

Best to use a good mixer for this. Mix the creamer and coffee together. Then add the red color and yellow color. Add the flour and mix all of this into a smooth paste.

Next add the Karo syrup. Then add the liquid detergent with the mixer running on the slowest setting. Last, add the green color, a couple of drops at a time until you get the color you want. Best to test the color on your skin.



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# Go-Go Instro with THE HONKEYS

I first heard The Honkeys on The Wayback Machine back in the spring of 2000 and then saw them live the very next day at the Riverfront Times Saint Louis Music Awards (Slammies) showcase in the U. City Loop. They were clearly the freshest, tightest, ass-shakingest outfit I'd seen around Saint Louis for some time—and the only big-beat instrumental outfit (from here) that I can remember worthy of mentioning. At that time The Honkeys were a quartet with Jeff leading with an explosive classic Fender Stratocaster or beautiful vintage Mosrite guitar, driving a tight big-beat rhythm section of bass, drums, and classic Farfisa organ and melding it all into an interesting spy movie/evil hot rod sound.

Even though their sound has changed quite a bit since then (more on this later), their stuff is still dynamic, cleverly written, well put together and thought out, and their unique brand of what most would call "surf music" does not bore or ever fall into a rut. The Honkeys have been packing 'em into the clubs around town like the Hi-Pointe, Side Door, Galaxy and Way Out Club since 1998 due to their great stage charisma and unique, exciting sound.

They've hit the road a few times and last summer recorded a forthcoming CD, Tequila Mockingbird, at Jim Marrer's Zero Return Studios (where Man or Astro-Man? Recorded 11+ LPs) in Elmore, Alabama. The songs on that CD are more indicative of the band's more danceable, simple, up-beat, surf-influenced style and not so much that of the band's new direction, which has ironically mirrored that somewhat of Made From Technitium/Eeviac-era MOAM. Tequila Mockingbird is really a great album, and the rumors that they may decide to shelve those tunes for good, in favor of this new sound, are a bit hard to swallow. Some have described this new sound as sort of an instrumental variation on "math rock" (more in common with bands like Don Caballero than that of more traditional, surf-sounding instrumental groups), which is a more technical sound with odd tempo changes that might harken back to folks like Frank Zappa or King Crimson.

The band's somewhat abrupt change in sound coincided with the departure of organist Micah Edge and drummer Jovian Kind, who really helped uphold the Cramps-style "big beat" rhythm to their sound. Dave Devine of The Cripple has joined them behind the drum kit and The Honkeys have been



playing sporadic shows as well as a couple of keg parties at their practice space in Hazelwood.

I didn't make it to either of those keggers, but the Honkeys invited me to one of their beer-fueled basement rehearsals on behalf of Head in a Milk Bottle. They put on a good show for me, complete with smoke machine and miniature blinking lights.

I went there with the intention of asking them a few questions about their humble beginnings, their musical manifesto, and their soon-to-be-released CD. I sat on an old couch placed directly up in front



of the band. As I popped open a beer, the trio blazed through a very tight set that plastered me into the couch. About 45 minutes later, they took a break and Dave spoke up, "So, Bob, you wanted to ask us some questions?"

**HIAMB (Bob):** State your names and your role in The Honkeys.

**Cullen:** I'm Cullen McGrane and I play the bass.

**Jeff:** Jeff Thomas, stock guitar.

**Dave:** Dave Devine, drummer extraordinaire.

**HIAMB:** When did the Honkeys begin as a band?

**Jeff:** What year? That would be in '96 when we first started calling ourselves The Honkeys.

**Cullen:** Yeah, I met Jeff at a coffee shop, and he came up and asked me if I wanted to play bass in his band.

**Jeff:** But we weren't a surf band back then; we were a progressive noise band.

**HIAMB:** Ah! So you were calling yourselves a "surf" band for a while. That's the phase with the Saltines (go-go dancers), I take it.

**Jeff:** Yeah, that was Phase Two of The Honkeys. Phase One was seven of us all not knowing how to play our instruments and we were yelling into the microphones and writing great songs called "Government Cheese" and "Rumplestiltskin" and...

**Cullen:** [Breaks in] "The Dada Reincarnate!"

**Jeff:** [Laughs] Yeah! "The Dada Reincarnate" and "Club 367," which was a club where all these metal bands performed all the time, and the roof caved in so we wrote a song about it. We were smartasses.

**HIAMB:** So, eventually, you began to learn a couple of chords and actually play your instruments?

**Jeff:** Well, no. I always really knew how to play the guitar. I used to play in a coffee shop and I would play flamenco guitar—kinda pseudo-flamenco guitar, actually—since I never trained as one. My brother was a punk rock drummer. He was in the band back then, too. He left right before Jovian started playing drums for us.

**Cullen:** Yeah, the original Honkeys was just kinda like a big inside joke and after a while we realized nobody else thought it was funny because it was too far gone for anybody to really understand what was going on.



**Jeff:** Yeah, we were really ahead of our time, that's for sure. [That was the inside joke.] So we had to come up with a sound that was a little more familiar to the ear, and it was accidentally surf music.

**HIAMB:** You have a problem with being labeled a surf band, don't you?

**Jeff:** Yeah, a little bit. If you label yourself a surf band then you have certain standards that you have to live up to. Like the 12-bar blues... most surf bands use a lot of traditional techniques, and there's a certain expectation on the part of the audience who wants to hear a surf band sound a certain way, and if you don't sound that way they'll ask you, "why don't you play more surf-sounding stuff?" They're looking for that traditional '60s go-go or beach sound. And as a musician I don't see the point of mimicking that sound when you can use the reverb guitar styles and other guitar techniques that the older bands used to sculpt something completely new. So I guess we're more of a progressive surf/instro band even though our sound is a lot more powerful than most "prog" surf bands.

**Cullen:** And not only that, but you get stuck in a genre of surf bands where you can only play certain places. Like the 21 & up clubs, because the club owners think that the appeal of a surf band is just for older audiences, or the only places that wanted to book us were bars, even though they occasionally booked all-ages shows.

**Jeff:** Yeah and only certain people would come to see a surf band.

**Cullen:** And you only get to open up for certain similar bands.

**Jeff:** And that kinda limits booking shows. Because a lot of club owners want to book you with other bands that play the same style. And we probably really transcend a lot of those styles because we don't adhere to the typical surf sound all the time.

**HIAMB:** But don't you get that anyway? Regardless of the fact that you call yourselves an instrumental band or try to not label yourselves as that? Don't people automatically want to categorize it as "surf" anyway? Seems to me like you're fighting a losing battle!

**Jeff:** You really can't tell people what to think. There's nothing we can do about it. But if you get into that mode of thinking that you're just a typical surf band then you end up

tending to write just typical surf songs, and we don't want to do that, so

that's why we like to shy away from that pigeonholing.

**Cullen:** Yeah, I think things are progressing, even in punk right now. There's another local instrumental band called Ring, Cicada and they're obviously not a "surf" band. They're not stuck with that labeling.

**HIAMB:** A lot of older fans at your shows?

**Jeff:** A lot of older surf connoisseurs, and it's like, we don't like those people!! [Laughter]

We want more young teenage girls to come and throw their panties at us than older surf heads! We don't want their panties! No, seriously, it's just a small group of people, though, really, who are into that, and to be successful band you would have to broaden your horizons a little bit and we need to attract a broader fanbase. We're trying to attract a younger audience, definitely.

**Cullen:** Shit man, we weren't even 21 yet and we were playing 21 & up shows all the time, so right off the bat, all of our audience and fans that would have come and seen us, our friends and people we hung out with, weren't allowed to because they were too young. They couldn't get into the clubs!

**HIAMB:** But a lot of people still came out to see you guys because you were known as a surf band...

**Jeff:** Even with being the only surf band in St. Louis, we gained notoriety just on that. Randall Roberts wrote a great piece on us for his column in the Riverfront Times. But I don't really believe we are the only surf band in St. Louis. The Civil Tones—whether you wanna label them as surf or not—they're an instrumental band, too. Then there's The Studebakers, who I've heard call themselves a surf band, but I've never seen them...



**Dave:** Look what happened to The Untamed Youth. They were one of the greatest bands to play music of that kind, in my opinion. But when you are stuck in Missouri, there's only a small fraction of people who care about what is going on around them.

**HIAMB:** I noticed during your practice here tonight that there seems to be a big difference between the new songs written as a 3-piece and the old songs left over from the previous lineup.

**Jeff:** A lot of people notice the difference since the keyboard is gone. But the sound is a lot bigger as we're trying to fill out the sound without becoming just loud. I just went stereo on the guitar sound and I'm still experimenting on how to get a big sound and I'm having fun playing through two amps, a Hot Rod Deluxe and a Bandmaster Reverb. Cullen has a big amp with lots of speakers and Dave is as loud as hell.

**Dave:** I've been given a chance to stretch out a bit. I've always been just a straightforward drummer.

**Jeff:** Before Dave joined our band he didn't know what a triplet was. When we write a new song and we are describing it to Dave, we can't use music talk. We say things like "bring the thunder, Dave." [Dave proceeds to demonstrate what that means to him.]

**HIAMB:** How would you respond to accusations from your fans that your new direction isn't as danceable as your old stuff?

**Cullen:** I'd totally agree. A lot of it isn't danceable. It's not like totally all driving surf stuff. Plus, what fans of ours ever actually danced at any of our shows, anyway? They're all too busy doin' "The Stand." Standing there doin' the "indie nod" or whatever you wanna call it. But you can dance to anything. Most of our newer stuff is more influenced by Fugazi or the Descendents, but it's still danceable.

**HIAMB:** Has becoming a 3-piece outfit allowed you to stretch out some and help break from the more traditional surf style or were you moving that direction when Jovian and Micah were in the Monkeys?

**Jeff:** It was a general consensus, even last year, that we were trying to get out of the mindset of being that mundane, typical surf band and were kinda growing out of it.

**Cullen:** It's just hard for us when we never listened to surf music really. We listen to like, The Boredoms, and we have all these massive influences and pretty much none of them were surf bands.

**HIAMB:** Aw, c'mon! I know for a fact that you guys have a ton of great classic surf albums, from The Pyramids, Ventures and New Dimensions to modern stuff like Satan's Pilgrims and The Bomboras!

**Cullen:** No, I totally agree with that. I'm not bashing on surf or anything. I became more familiar with that great surf stuff from listening to The Wayback Machine on KDHX, and I usually listened to the indie stuff and girlie bands. The surf thing was like a slow progression, and we didn't know about that shit until Pulp Fiction slapped us in the face with it, and then Los Straitjackets, and fuck yeah, The Bomboras... the second show we ever played was opening for them and they were just so cool to us and they completely blew us away. Of course I still listen to it but it's really hard to come by now. They don't stock it at stores anywhere and we really need to focus on other influences because it's obvious that the surf thing has died down.

**Jeff:** Like I said, we stumbled upon surf accidentally. We were writing songs that just happened to be instrumentals and then all of a sudden we heard Dick Dale and they called that surf so that's how it happened. I can't deny the surf influence; it's there. The reverb is turned all the way up, I've got the tremolo, the picking, and there are the driving drums and bass. If we're a surf band, well, we're a surf band.

**HIAMB:** So, once you heard Dick Dale and these other surf influences, did it help mold your sound or change your approach to your instrumental songwriting any?

**Jeff:** Oh yeah, it did. The surf music that we heard at first was completely new to me. And when I heard Dick Dale and all that I discovered there may actually be a market for what we were trying to do. And his stuff had a very Eastern influence, like "Misirlou," and when I first heard him take that song and put it into a rock'n'roll format I was like, "Wow!" And I figured I could do that with different genres like jazz and turn it into instrumental rock'n'roll, too.

**Cullen:** Yeah, we would sit down and listen to these records and really analyze certain things, like the reverb sound and how he got his guitar to roar like that, and getting the bass to sound so smooth. We were totally infatuated with the whole reverb sound. And then we went and saw Satan's Pilgrims at the Hi-Pointe and they had these huge Fender dual Showman Reverb stacks and the reverb sounded like water. It was just amazing. They were a lot different from Los Straitjackets or The Bomboras. Who knows where they're at now...

**HIAMB:** So explain why you guys 86ed the Saltines.

**Jeff:** It just became too much of a novelty, and we started to depend on them being there too much in order to put on a good show. Having them up there on stage forced me to just stand in one spot and play guitar and I didn't have to entertain—I just let the Saltines do it for me. And there were too many dudes coming to our shows. We want more teenage girls throwing their panties!

**Cullen:** In hindsight I'll agree with Jeff. And this may get me in trouble, but because of the Saltines we didn't move. We just stood there and let them attract the crowd, but having those girls in the band was so much motherfuckin' drama. Just too much drama. That was so fucked up. We wanted go-go girls to help us try to get people to dance but that stung us in the ass so hard... [Laughs.]

**HIAMB:** Don't you feel that people really miss that aspect of your stage show?

**Jeff:** Oh, they definitely do. Of course, they're all guys! I haven't had one girl say "Where are the Saltines? We miss the Saltines!" But yeah, we do hear that a lot. Although, I do still get a lot of girls wanting to audition for the Saltines...

**Cullen:** The girls in the audience would tear the Saltines up, dude. They'd tear them new assholes. Not directly, but I'm sure they got some evil looks. They would seriously just rip on them, because they didn't like the way they danced



or thought they could do better, especially to us after a show. It was really weird. And the only people that said that were other girls. That just added to all the drama. It's nice not having to worry about all that anymore so we can concentrate on the actual music!

**HIAMB: Where have you been playing lately? I haven't seen you out at the clubs much in the last few months.**

**Cullen:** Playing keg parties right here.

**Jeff:** Yeah, keg parties. It's helped us perform, I think. We don't have to worry about how we look or sound and we're just stupid drunk. [Much laughter.] And these turned out to be some of our best shows ever! Playing those keg parties has helped us communicate within the band, too.

**HIAMB: What about the forthcoming CD? [More laughter.]**

**Jeff:** It'll be out when we have the money. It's really hard to release a CD by yourself.

**Cullen:** We keep learning from mistakes. Most involve money management.

**HIAMB: Any luck shopping around for a label?**

**Jeff:** The first 500 copies will be sold by us outright. A label would be good, but we need money so we'll just sell these ourselves at shows. We plan to be playing enough shows to pay for it.

**HIAMB: Maybe you should charge more at the door at the keg parties!**

**Cullen:** We don't make anything at the keg parties.

**HIAMB: Hmmm... and you wonder why you have money problems! You don't even charge a cover at your keggers?**

**Jeff:** [Laughs.] That's hard to enforce... door covers. People always find a way to sneak in. We've made money from selling t-shirts and stickers, but that's it. We've only played two of them. Just helped us out, as performers, being drunk and in a basement. I think we play better live now because of them. They're more for practice than anything. Just something fun to do, something outside of what we're used to, and we'll play three sets, which we never do at clubs, either.

**Cullen:** Yeah, and it's at our friend's house and he lets us practice there. It's just a bunch of old friends and friends' friends who haven't had a chance to see us yet. So we're like, "networking." And yeah, man, it's great practice. You don't have some stupid venue getting pissed at you for standing on the amps and playing drunk and stuff.

**HIAMB: Are you planning on recording anything as a 3-piece?**

**Jeff:** I like the 3-piece playing live, but in the studio I like to add other instruments. Playing as a 3-piece allows us to be tighter. Before, the organ was like off in its own little world.

**Cullen:** In the first place, we've had a problem with organ players not knowing how to operate the organ. They knew how to play keyboards but didn't know how to plug it in. And this happened constantly. But we definitely have plans to record again. When we get the money for it we will. We made so many mistakes on the first recording and we need to do a better job of planning for it next time.

**Jeff:** The 3-piece just feels nice. And for us to add another instrument, well, we would really have to be able to connect first. Right now we are busy putting our plan into action. We have our press kits, and a list of labels. We just need to get the CD out. We've been talking to a lot of bands from other towns about swapping shows, but with the lineup change it's like starting all over.

**HIAMB: When was it that Jovian and Micah left the band and why did they leave?**

**Jeff:** They left last Halloween. Micah left because he was having problems with school and needed to focus on that, and Jovian left because, I don't know... I think he was just tired of it. And now he's living in L.A. and is engaged to Exene Cervenka! [Congrats, Jov & Exene!]

**HIAMB: Now, Dave is also in The Cripplees, who just recently got signed to Dionysus Records. Does this pose any problems for either band? Do you (Dave) plan on sticking with The Honkeys while you can?**

**Dave:** Yeah, I plan on sticking with these guys. I liked them long before I joined up. I thought it was a wonderful

opportunity so I jumped on it. So far touring or anything hasn't posed a problem, so I don't see why I can't do both.

**HIAMB: I guess the next question is what are your individual influences? What are you listening to now?**  
**Jeff:** The Boredoms. And I've been listening to a lot of Sonic Youth, which has nothing to do with the music that I'm playing. I like The Boredoms. It's just a great band.

**Cullen:** Stereolab, the new Bjork, (International) Noise Conspiracy, The Four Corners, Thee Michelle Gun Elephant. A lot of awesome bands are coming out of Japan like Guitar Wolf...

**Dave:** The Revelators, Metallica's Ride the Lightning, D.R.I., Devo's Greatest Hits Live. My influences for drumming would be like The Rolling Stones or CCR.

**HIAMB: What about current fave instrumental bands that you've heard?**

**Jeff:** Obviously Man or Astro-Man. I bought a really interesting CD the other day that was by a great band called Laika & The Cosmonauts which I really like, and I've been listening a lot to Fugazi's Instrument soundtrack lately.



**Cullen:** A band called Air, and that fuckin' Tomorrow's Caveman CD is awesome! Tim Lohmann's instrumentals are the fucking best. They're so goddamned addictive... "Velvet Underwear." Man, those are awesome. Surf-wise I haven't heard anything new in a long time.

**HIAMB: What do you think have been some of your biggest stumbling blocks that you've encountered as a surf/instrumental band?**

**Jeff:** The absence of lyrics. For some reason people love to see someone up on stage singing. I don't think it really matters what it is they're singing, either. I think instrumental music is an abstract idea to most people and it's hard for them to relate to it, without someone telling them what the song is about (i.e., the singer). The song "Portrait of a Lady" is an experimentation into that, with our friend Morgan just singing syllables. They aren't real words, and I don't think anyone even knows that when we play it. It was still an instrumental song, but just using her voice as another instrument, because there weren't any actual lyrics.

**HIAMB: Your new logo and the look of your promo packs is really interesting. Tell us about that.**

**Jeff:** That's all the work of Mark Wightman at Phoenix Creative. The guy was awesome. He was always on the same page with us, got all of our inside jokes, was very patient with us—even when we were being really impatient—and he really helped us out a bunch. And the design he came up with was perfect for the look we were after. He's just a great guy and a fantastic designer, even though he looks like Rowdy Roddy Piper! [laughs.]

**HIAMB: Anything else you'd like to share with our readers? Any special messages?**

**Jeff:** Our new web site should be up soon ([www.thehonkeys.net](http://www.thehonkeys.net)) and our CD will be out as soon as we're done with replication. We have something special planned for our Halloween show but it's a secret. We've done a Halloween show every year and we try to make those our best shows. We're going to have to do a lot of promoting for this show, though, because Halloween falls on a Wednesday night this year and it's at the Way Out Club.

That's it!

Would you like to learn more about the current surf music scene? Subscribe to the "Cowabunga" e-mail list dedicated to surf and instrumental rock'n'roll from the '50s to the present. Just visit [www.poprecords.com/cowabunga/](http://www.poprecords.com/cowabunga/) for more info.







**Just about** every music pick up, including HIAMB, has pages and pages of record reviews. Reading these reviews is a great way to see what's been recently released or reissued.

Something the staff of HIAMB feels is more important than knowing what new records are out there, is knowing what *old* records are out there. There are some records that will never be out-done. Unless you're the second cousin of Tim Yohannan or happened to stumble into some other godlike relationship with a larger-than-life-size collection of music, there's no way one can know all the amazing records that exist. In our feeble attempt to clue our readers into what great music they may have missed, we decided to give you this on-going column. These are the slabs of wax that we cannot live without—the music you *should* not live without. What follows are the bands and records that have given us instant gratification. These are the kinds of records that make us instantly wish we were coordinated enough to dance, then forget we care and dance to exhaustion anyway. They are the records we heard once on a friend's wobbly tape deck and then spent hour upon hour in the weeks (sometime years!) to come trying to find a copy to call our own. They're the records of our youth, the records we wish we were cool enough to know about when we were youths, and the records we will play again and again and again.

Got the picture? Good. Now on to how to find yer own, that is if you're going to trust a bunch of record geeks to tell you what to buy...

First off: chain record stores. I'll keep this section short (sparing readers the corporate slandering one can read in any independent 'zine) and say simply, two words: cutout bins. It's definitely worth the few minutes it takes to scan this section, if they have one. (It'll be the small, dirty section in the back of the store.) The savvy record hunter could once find the classic "DIY" series on Rhino here, and other gems turn up occasionally for a few bucks a pop.

Onto your local hipster record mart. This is the store where the punk-looking kids hang out in front of on Friday nights (why aren't these kids at a show, damn it? St. Louis isn't like other cities like Memphis, where the kids are wasting time consuming hidden alcohol until they're off to the show starting at midnight... but that's another subject). If you still don't know what I mean, these are the stores that carry all the major label stuff on CD for a buck cheaper than your chain store. These stores are great for finding all of the classic bands on CD. If they don't have it, chances are they can order it. A lot of them also stock a fair selection of new and newly reissued vinyl LPs. Most of the time they cost about the same as what you'd pay for an original copy of the LP, so if you don't care about having the original, pick these up and smile about still being able to buy The Avengers LP new on wax. This wasn't a possibility a few years ago. To get a copy of the record to call your own you could search endless record stores for a used copy (good luck!), or order it from some high-priced dealer. If you did find a used copy chances are it would be over-priced and/or well-worn.

If you were extremely lucky you'd find a weird comic book/action figure/record store with cutout copies of the desirable records hidden in a cardboard box under racks of thousands upon thousands of worn, slightly water-damaged, '70s rock and '80s pop. Unfortunately, with all the record hunters desperately fighting their allergies to find that box of long-forgotten sealed punk records, these

days are even fewer and farther between. Breathe deeply, pay an extra five dollars for that new reissue, and sing along to "The American in Me" all night long.

There is a large selection of independently owned labels and distributors selling a fine selection of fun-loving rock'n'roll. Most of them have web sites and there are still quite a few with print catalogs available. (What better material to drool over while eating your lunch?) Here are a few of our favorites. They're all great places to buy music from. (CDs, LPs, 7"s, and 10"s!) All are reliable, reasonable and contain a much greater selection of new music than what you'll find in your local record stop.

Bomp! Records and affiliates (Voxx, Total Energy/Alive, AIP, and Marilyn—

[www.bomp.com](http://www.bomp.com)), Norton ([www.nortonrecords.com](http://www.nortonrecords.com)), Dionysus/Bacchus Archives

([www.dionysusrecords.com](http://www.dionysusrecords.com)), Underground Medicine ([www.undergroundmedicine.com](http://www.undergroundmedicine.com)), Crypt Records

([www.cryptrecords.com](http://www.cryptrecords.com)), Dave Hill Distribution ([www.dave-hill.org](http://www.dave-hill.org)), Posh Boy ([www.poshboy.com](http://www.poshboy.com)), Get Hip ([www.gethip.com](http://www.gethip.com)), and Estrus ([www.estrus.com](http://www.estrus.com)). Let us not forget our slightly-more-expensive-but-worth-it foreign friends: Incognito

([www.incognitorecords.de](http://www.incognitorecords.de)) and Cherry Red/Anagram ([www.cherryred.co.uk](http://www.cherryred.co.uk)).

The conventional record shopping adventure at your local second-hand record store can be the most time consuming, but most rewarding. Check your local Yellow Pages or the book for the city you're traveling to. There's nothing like stepping up to the racks of records and flipping to a clean copy of the record you've only seen pictured in books or online collector/archive sites. Finding out about the stores in the area is more than half the fun. Before heading out to see what your local store has, it's best to get an idea of what your sought-after record is worth (easily done by checking an Alternative Record/New Wave record guide, usually available at your local library). Some stores have a standard \$5 tag on anything used, and while this might be a bargain for a mint copy of Fun House it's better to shop around if you're looking for The dB's or The Waitresses. Others will price their records according to condition and current value. Beware of stores or "dealers" that think anything punk or alternative is worth money and, worse yet, any record is worth money. If you think a record is too expensive it probably is—at least too expensive for you. It's better to take a chance on that kinda new wavy-looking band on Sire for \$3 than spend \$50 for the English punk single because it's "worth" more or it was on eBay for \$75 (remember, it might be "rare" here but there could be thousands upon thousands of copies for sale in England!). Also, don't be discouraged from atypical stores. You never know where great records can show up. The longhaired guy behind the counter of the incense-smelling metal head shop





isn't going to know how great the Lyres 45 is. Likewise, the 75-year-old woman behind the counter of that odd secondhand store down the block isn't going to know that the Richard Hell and the Voidoids LP is worth more than a dollar.

There are, of course, other ways to get the music you desire, without spending all your money at online record sites (good if you really need that record and want it now—www.gemm.com), or driving yourself crazy getting out-bid on eBay. (One side note here: eBay will fluctuate and piss you off but sometimes you'll find classics at a good price, go figure. Everyone must have it already, because it's worth more than the price it's going for, or people just don't care anymore. Of course that can, and will, change. What's reasonable today can become annoyingly popular, and expensive, next week. That aside, it does pay to check it out occasionally. Not everyone who wants a record is going to see it, or bid on it, so scroll 'til your eyes hurt if you desire. Sometimes it pays off.)

Another option is picking up an issue of Goldmine magazine (for more info visit www.krause.com/records/gm). The tiny printing from Uncle Jim's Record Cove will stain your hands but this is the place to find stores and collectors to send your want lists. Taking the time to write down what you want and sending it out can certainly pay off. If you don't hear from them, you're only out postage, but it's great to get a call asking if you still want that Nikki and the Corvettes LP you asked for six months ago. (Okay, so it's been reissued, with bonus tracks... Remember that before you spend \$30 on that album you haven't seen in years.) They're also the originators of the most commonly used grading system of records and record sleeves (very important when buying used vinyl through the mail!).

Every three months (more frequently in more fortunate cities) St. Louis is graced by a record show held at the American Czech Center, (make sure to check out the entertaining athletic pictures in the lobby!) just south of Chippewa at Landsdown & Kingshighway in south St. Louis (watch for the big wooden A-frame sign pointing you in the right direction.) No matter what your lazy friend says, record shows are definitely worth crawling out of bed for on a Sunday morning. (Don't feel bad if you forget to shower—you won't be the only one!) Sign up for the mailing list to receive a handy card for a dollar off the small entrance fee or pick up a card at your local record shop. Digging out the treasures (there are always a few) before the other nerds is half the fun, just remember the same rules that apply to record stores and dealers in general remain the same here. Watch out for records in plastic with high price tags and never underestimate the possibilities of the "All Records \$1" boxes. After a few visits it's easy to remember which vendor has the treasures (if you can stomach his boring banter). Star dealers are usually those that enjoy the beer, pretzels, and actually listening to scratchy 45s at their neighbor's table. For more information on St. Louis Record & CD Shows, call Jim Ronat at (618) 654-3049 or Carl Kueller at (314) 821-9121.

If I haven't yet turned you away from hunting for records you never heard of, here's a bunch of records you may have never heard of. Look forward to more and more of them because there's more than you think, and more you may love than you know... —Anne Blanchard

**THE GUN CLUB** *Fire of Love* LP/CD (Slash/Warner Bros.)

The year was 1981, a few years after the punk explosion and many years after Robert Johnson and the blues had left their mark on music... For me, even at first listen way back in 1981, this album epitomized most all forms of music. It was and still is one of the greatest rock 'n' roll records of all time. It starts out with the now-classic "Sex Beat." The first thing you hear is the fast-paced rhythm of the drums, then that incredible high-toned guitar, and finally the thumping

bass. At a time when punk bands didn't seem to care too much about production it is evident that The Gun Club and the producers of this album went through painstaking means to make an incredible sounding LP. Now I'm not talking Whitney Houston digi-shit production. I'm talking about the Mother-of-Invention production using knobs that most "engineers" won't even touch 'cause they don't know what the hell they're for—the ones that control impedance, compression, and tones the likes of which hadn't been played around with since George Martin and The Beatles.

*Fire of Love* was produced and engineered by two groups, one being Chris D (of Fleshateaters fame and later with The Divine Horsemen, as well as a solo career) and Pat Burnette. The other set being Tito Larriba (of The Plugz and later of the semi-popular Cruzados—who had a video hit with "Bad of Lies"—and currently of Tarantula, the house band in the movie From Dusk Till Dawn) and Noah Shark. Both teams worked together for the mastering of the album, putting their two halves together to make one album.

Back to "Sex Beat." Jeffrey Lee Pierce is no Pavarotti, this is for sure. In fact, some would say his singing is difficult to listen to. But all admit to its fantastic character. He sings with much dissidence that a true musician or blues man would understand—in layman's terms he works with what he's got. What he lacks in vocal talent, he makes up for lyrically tenfold:

*Johnny's got a light on his eyes  
Shirley's got a light on her lips  
Jake's got a monkeyshine on his head and  
Debra Ann's got a tiger in her hips  
They can twist and turn they can move and burn  
They can throw themselves against the wall  
But they creep for what they need  
And they explode to the call and then they move  
Move  
Sex beat, go*

This conjures up all kinds of images and thoughts about our own sexuality. It is on the second track, "Praising the Blues," that Pierce and fellow guitarist Ward Dotson show us that the slide guitar is not a dying art form. The fact is that the slide is used a lot on this album, in traditional and non-traditional ways. "Promise Me" has an incredibly haunting ghost-of-Louisiana-swamp feel, due in part to the never-ending tone of the violin supplied by Tito.

Every song on this album hits me hard and strong, but my all-time favorite is one Pierce co-wrote with Kid Congo Powers (who would go on to become an actual member of The Gun Club on their next album, Miami). This song, "For the Love of Ivy," kicks my ass. Before the days of rap or hip-hop, this track is the first to my knowledge that has that booming bass THUMP that makes your speakers pulse. The kick drum is massive and I return to the rest of the album to realize the clarity in recording every drum and cymbal present. In fact, every instrument is there clear and pure. The drums were played by Terry Graham and the bass by Rob Rittner.

The Gun Club would later split up, allowing Jeffrey Lee Pierce to go solo for a while before reforming the band, but none of their later albums would hold the power and intensity that this gem does. Hell, for me NO album is this complete by ANYONE! It is everything haunting and stark yet full and thick. The songs are complete musically and lyrically, and in a time when all in their association were striving for "punkness," The Gun Club produced something SO different. Where should it be categorized? Is it punk? Is it blues? It really doesn't matter. It is fantastic. —JAIMZ

**STINKY TOYS** *s/LP* (Polydor, 1977)

Before punk became the seasoned trunk of its modern family tree, it was a raw new concept blossoming from the even deeper roots of rock itself. Buzz-bands like The Stooges, The Heartbreakers, and The New York Dolls pushed the limits. Soon to follow in their steps, outfits like The Damned, The Boys, The Rezillos, and The Undertones were upping the adrenaline and attitude while still retaining a melody and proficiency reminiscent of their forefathers. The first Stinky Toys album belongs in this same category, showcasing exemplary innovative song writing that rocks with a shrewd edge nearly lost to the overloaded punk of today. Eli Medeiros' unique vocals burst with fluctuating pulses of sincerity and spit over the band's loose/light dynamic groove. Someone once referred to them as an uninspired sub-Rolling Stones with terrible vocals, so pick your poison. Personally, I love it. It is a rare feat in rock to remain both subtle and original, but the group meshes together like the magic fervor of a lab 4. Natural, energetic, and truly infectious, this was a real evolution for rock.

As another lost gem sunk deeply in the volcanic rock of the '77 punk explosion, the excavation of this phenomenal record is well worth the effort. Although the album is somewhat difficult to come across nowadays, it can usually be found in certain collector circles for a reasonable price. Be careful to look for the Polydor release, as there is a second self-titled output on the French label, Vogue, that is good but nowhere near the same caliber. —Christian Hoti

**THE SAINTS** *Eternally Yours* (originally released on EMI, now available on Captain OTI AHOV CD 127)

For all you rock 'n' roll newbies, The Saints' *Eternally Yours* LP should be amongst your initial investments of high-energy music. Any real rock 'n' roller would place these Queensland, Australia rockers amongst the down-under's pedestal of greatness (i.e., The Chosen Few, The Scientists, and even the almost-immortal Birdman). This, their second disc, was recorded in 1978, in the overly politicized, yet dying London scene. Indeed! The great tunesmanship (i.e., "Know Your Product," "This Perfect Day," "Lost and Found," etc.) should have been worshipped on a daily basis by all the U.K. punks. Yes, horns and keyboards were intermingled with this recording session, even though these songs mainly focused on the great fury of three-chord R&B energy. This R&B connection ended up being a sore spot amongst the overly critical British scenesters at the time.

Additionally, The Saints were deemed "not cool enough" to have been placed amongst the "elite" London punks. The fact was that The Saints did not give a rat's ass about scene pabulum, as documented on "Eternally Yours." Love songs about anger did not appeal to the "Oh Bondage, Up Yours!" punk attitude. This rhetoric was a big loss to these misinformed punk purists, because this record should definitely be in every self-righteous punk's top five list of all-time favorite albums.



Because The Saints did not follow EMI Records' (The Saints' record company) formula of paint-by-numbers punk, they did not appeal to most U.K. scenesters (ranging from record company executives, to journalists, to the working class Joe). The image-conscious British punks could not look beyond the fact that The Saints had members with long hair, wore rock 'n' roll clothing instead of bondage trousers, and plainly did not care what the collective scene of sheep thought of them. How more punk can you be, by standing up for your beliefs, despite the fact that the scene Gestapo probably had way too much time on their hands?

Eventually, The Saints got tired of receiving the trite 24/7 sluggings, moved back to the land of Fosters beer and vegemite, and formed separate bands—unfortunately never achieving the same greatness as The Saints. Later on, the band got back together, and recorded some sub-par albums, not even on the same plane as *Eternally Yours*, which, even though it may not have followed the typical punk sound when it was released, has definitely stood the test of time and is therefore an essential record. (www.captainotai.com)

—Angus "three ANTIHIPSTER"

**THE SONICS: Here Are The Sonics!!!** (originally released on Etiquette in 1965, now available on LP or CD as Norton NW903)

In my humble opinion this was the first punk rock record EVER, from the most brutal teen combo to ever walk the earth. Sure, you can argue that some earlier releases by other artists had some punk tendencies, but none were as overwhelmingly evident as the fierceness cut into the grooves of this unreal, blistering classic.

Recorded in 1965, this album laid the groundwork for rock 'n' roll in its most primal form and I dare say there wouldn't even be a genre called garage rock if it weren't for these five young punks from Tacoma, Washington. Here is where we can really apply ALL of the adjectives we like to bandy about so often: Raw, savage, wild, untamed, nasty, trashy, distorted and LOUD as fuck. The album was recorded on a two-track tape recorder with only one microphone to back up the whole drum kit. To get the distortion and aggressive sound the band members had to overload the amps and redline the studio deck's VU meter. You not only get "scorchers" like "The Witch" and "Psycho" but also such greats as "Have Love Will Travel," "Boss Hoss," and "Dirty Robber" among others. Copies of the original pressings of this LP sell for upwards of a hundred bucks. But save your dough because the fine folks at Norton Records reissued this baby as part of their Northwest Series about a year ago, and with four extra tracks! You can find it online at [www.nortonrecords.com](http://www.nortonrecords.com), or send a buck for their fabulous catalog to: P.O. Box 646 Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276-0646. Telephone: (718) 789-4438. And tell Billy or Miriam that Kopper sent ya!

**THE DEVIL DOGS** *30 Sizzling Slabs* CD (Crypt)

Yeah, yeah, I know... I picked a repackaging of the Devil Dogs first three LPs instead of selecting one of those original LPs to review. So sue me. But really, when I sat down to try to think of my favorite Devil Dogs LP, I kept thinking back to this extraordinary CD and the fact that it itself is simply one of the most essential CDs in my collection, so there you have it. May as well start at the beginning, right?

*30 Sizzling Slabs* is a deluxe collection of good old-fashioned trashy rock 'n' roll, remastered and with two extra tracks of most of the recorded material spanning 1989-1991 of one of the most important punk rock 'n' roll bands that I've ever heard. You actually get 32 cuts here, pulled from the self-titled debut LP from 1989, the Big Beef Bonanza! LP from '90, and the We Three Kings mini-LP from '92. When *We Three Kings* was originally released, it was rushed, and the mastering suffered, leaving a pretty muffled sound. Well, the remastering on this disc has put that high-end bite back where it belongs, so if you wanna hear *We Three Kings* the way it was meant to sound, then there's another reason why this CD is essential. For vinyl fanatics, Crypt also reissued all the cuts from Big Beef Bonanza! and *We Three Kings* onto one great-sounding 18-cut LP, Bigger Beef Bonanza!, which also has the non-CD bonus cut, "Twist and Burn" on it.

If you're not familiar with The Devil Dogs, a brief history lesson is in order! These guys played high-energy rock 'n' roll that had its feet planted as much in '50s rockabilly and R&B, and '60s garage as it did in '70s Ramones-style punk and rock 'n' roll. They had an abrasive, raw sound, great hooks, bad-ass Brooklyn attitude, catchy, simple songs, and they ROCKED like there was no fucking tomorrow! They also had the talent of being able to cover ANY song and almost invariably improving on the original. It's not rocket science, unleashing that secret formula of rock 'n' roll, but you'd think it was since it's really rare for a band to pull off the amount of intensity that these cats were. Sure, they caught a lot of flack from overly sensitive PC-types for their testosterone-laden misogynistic lyrics (i.e., "When ya gonna fuck me, baby, when ya gonna gimme head?") but the fact is, they were loved by guys and gals alike. As Tim Lakritz, web master of a Devil Dogs fan site on the Web says, "Speaking as a male, nothing can lift my spirits higher when the womenfolk have got me beat down than to listen to The Devil Dogs. When they've got you feeling lower than low, crank up "Baby I'm A King" and you ARE a fucking king, jack! At least for a couple minutes..." Amen!

The Devil Dogs originally formed in New York City in 1988 as The Rat Bastards, playing around that scene with bands like The Raunch Hands and The A-Bones. During the recording of their first LP for Crypt the band split up. Seems guitarist Pete Ciccone and drummer Paul Corio were really unhappy with Billy



(Childish's production, and then weren't any happier when Mike Mariconda (Raunch Hands) was brought in to twist the knobs. So they left the band, with Pete going on to form The Vacant Lot. Guitarist Andy G. and bassist Steve Baise convinced Paul to come back and finish the LP. They rechristened themselves The Devil Dogs, and the record finally saw the light of day in late '89. Paul then left the band for good, and they experimented with some different skin-pounders, until finally Dave Ari settled in with them long enough to record the 8-cut LP *Big Beef Bonanza!* This amazing release included originals like "North Shore Bitch," "Go on Girl," "Cheesecake" as well as rippin' covers of "I'm Gonna Make You Mine" (Shadows of Knight) and "Palisades Park" (Freddie "Boom Boom" Cannon). The record sold extremely well in Europe, but everyone in America was so caught up in this new-fangled "grunge" crap that no one here even seemed to notice, as sales of this record were less than 500! After the band returned from a tour of Europe and Japan, Dave Ari left and was replaced by Mighty Joe Vincent, who stuck with the band long enough for them to tour America for the first time and then lay down the songs that would become *We Three Kings*, including the absolutely killer "Strip Search," "Get in Line," "Baby I'm a King," "Rock City USA," etc. They would then tour Europe and Japan AGAIN before returning to record *Saturday Night Fever* and releasing it in March of '93, an album so stellar that it deserves its own ESL review in the future (count on it!).

When I think of modern garage punk, four bands come to mind that really helped revitalize the sound and became the guiding light for bands all around the world to form and be the backbone for this newly rediscovered genre, and those are The Mummies, Teenegenerate, The New Bomb Turks, and The Devil Dogs. If you're reading this mag and don't own any recordings by any of those bands, well, it's time to pay the piper (or, in this particular case, Tim Warren!). Send a buck for the Crypt USA catalog to 3 Reading Ave., Frenchtown, NJ 08825 or visit 'em online at [www.cryptrecords.com](http://www.cryptrecords.com), and order your copy of 30 Sizzling Slabs before it's too late. You won't be sorry! —kopper

**CRUCIFUCKS** s/t LP (Alternative Tentacles, 1984)

"The group has a controversial name we're not allowed to say on the air" is one of the many sound clips heard on this beauty. Sitting in my bedroom at age 14 in the middle of a Wisconsin winter, I saw the light. I mean, there were records I really dug when I first started listening to punk rock, but this is the record for me that finely honed my palette. The hardcore kids passed because it isn't (fast) hardcore, and only the ones who got it realized what a masterpiece it was, and still is. The general public took it as a threat, or a joke, especially blaring out of blue collar East Lansing, Michigan in 1984. The screeching vocal stylings of Doc Dart (who actually ran for Mayor of East Lansing where he runs a baseball card shop!) was exactly what I wanted from punk rock at that young, impressionable age. The sheer intensity of this album still sends chills up my spine. It's not for the musically timid, that's for sure, but contains more pissed-off-for-no-good-reason energy than 100 bands total today. Still in print from Alternative Tentacles on vinyl! — and paired up with their (almost) classic 1987 2nd LP, Wisconsin. —Jason Rerun

**THE KIDS** s/t LP

Three 15-year-old brats from Belgium. Easily summed up by the first song, "This is Rock'n'Roll." It's impossible to sit still listening to the drive of the fast and

steady bass and drums on The Kids' first album. The lyrics scream freedom and fun. All together it'll make you feel like it's right to be and do whatever the fuck you want to. It's amazing that a group of "Kids" in Belgium were able to have a full-length album released by a major label in the days when James Taylor, Blue Öyster Cult and Abba were on the radio! Originally released on Decca/Phonogram in 1976, a reissue of the first and second LP (*Naughty Kids*) together is on one CD available on Alora Music, distributed by PolyGram. Go to [www.thekids.be](http://www.thekids.be) to hear samples of their songs and order the CD.

**The Cramps A Date with Elvis** (Produced by the Cramps)

1986 LP on Big Beat 46 (UK), 1986 LP New Rose (France), 1990 CD on Big Beat/Capitol 73579, 1992 CD /CS on Big Beat/Capitol 73579, 1994 CD/LP/CS on Restless 72765, 2001 CD/LP on Vengeance 671

Certainly there are earlier Cramps releases that are "essential" and available—The LP "Songs the Lord Taught Us" (1980) and the "Gravest Hits" EP (1979) are there if you need to fix your Jones for some hell bent b-movie primal garage surf rockability that will twist your mind and body into the strangest contortions if you dare to groove to it. Go out and buy 'em wherever you buy your tunes but while you're there don't forget to pick up "A Date with Elvis." It's just been re-released on Vengeance and is my fave for numerous reasons that make it essential Cramps. The lineup was reduced to three band members who self produced this only release within a long period of time following a court battle with IRS records. Recorded in Fall of 1985 in Hollywood, CA, the production is a bit lush and much more "hi-fi" than previously mentioned stuff but when you crank this up on any stereo no matter how cheap it is, the big beat sounds bigger, you get more fuzz, tremolo, echo, reverb guitar. The vocals are all over ya and the lyrics are nothing short of classic involving mostly sex: "The Hot Pearl Snatch", "Can Your Pussy Do the Dog?" and dealing with bad people "People Ain't No Good"/"How Far Can Too Far Go?". It's a wild ride through the back roads of rock and roll with the pioneers of psychobilly. After wearing out 4 or 5 copies on cassette that "Rockabilly Steve" recorded for me years ago, I picked up a used copy of the import CD for 9 bucks and bought all the cool 12" singles on New Rose. It's out there again on Vengeance Records just in case you need to replace the current (scratched) copy in your collection. This is in your collection? ... Isn't it? —Bob

**JON WAYNE** *Texas Funeral* LP/CD

1983 LP Statik Records (out of print), 1992 LP Cargo Records (out of print), 1994 CD Fist Puppet (on indefinite backorder)

I only have a copy of this on cassette, recorded from rockabilly Steve Fairchild's record, who I believe is now a survivalist in the woods somewhere, but it's definitely an essential. YIP, about to hop my tractor and head for TEXAS. Ya know, on the first listen I didn't truly appreciate the musical prowess that is Jon Wayne. It grew on me like a fine Texas Wine. The piano virtuoso on "You, Me and the Kitten" and the guitar lick (or is it two?) that decorates the album, which I'll refer to as the "Jimbo lick" and the "Truckin' lick" make me want to grab my MAJOSHIA. Recommended listening while drunk and/or altered for best results. My friends (all two of them) constantly ask me to play *Texas Funeral* and that ain't no lie, NO GO DIGGIE DIE, YIP!!! —(The arteest formerly known as) SCHKTK

[Editor's Note: Jon Wayne/Texas Funeral sounds like a very drunk Walter Brennan singing over a CB radio about drinkin', horses, trucks, jail, tractors, Mexican bar waitresses, and Texas. Every track is nothing short of hilarious, including a long studio session with an annoying producer pulling his hair out in some sort of attempt to make commercial product from this wonderful mess of a drunken mix of country, polka and punk. While browsing the S1 cutout imports bin at a miserable, now-defunct chain record store, Ron Baery (upon my approval) bought it for the name alone. From the minute the needle hit that cheap slab 'til the early morning hours later we were on the floor laughing with tears in our eyes. The more we listened, the more intoxicated we got, the more we realized it was nothing short of genius. Later that night, we called a KDHX talk show and played "Mr. Egyptian" over the telephone and on the air as an intro to a short-lived call-in fishing report we messed with. To this day, I can't help but bust a gut laughing just thinking about it.

It's appropriate for most late-night social events but makes playing poker and other "conventional" party games other than "quarters" quite difficult. Perfect for sending family members and guests on their way out the door long after they have worn out their welcome.

Until available again, borrow it from a friend or use your usual method of procurement for hard-to-find items and figure it for out yourself.

The title track, "Texas Funeral," is featured in the 1996 flick, *From Dusk Till Dawn*. —ed/RT

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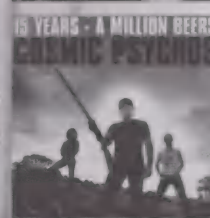


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# RECORD REVIEWS

## A-FRAMES *Plastica 7"* (SS Records)

This grows on you! Really it does. Read something somewhere about these guys and was curious. Played it and thought I'd been duped by yet more silly hype. Played it the next day and realized I was sorta compelled to dance to the B-side. Then I played it again and danced a bit more. OK, so I figure by the fifteenth spin I'm gonna be flopping on the floor. This has been a positive review I think. SS Records-1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 -Jason Rerun

## ACID KING/MYSTIC KREWE OF CLEARLIGHT split LP/CD (Man's Ruin)

Two bands one CD and it is very cool! Acid King is a 3-piece that is fronted by Lori who used to be married to Dale Crover, drummer of the Melvins, guitarist/vocalist for his side band, Altamont. They're union didn't last, but it didn't effect her band. The 4 songs on this CD are sludgy, like my love making, but they fucking rock! Clearlight, for short, have two songs on this CD that are really cool!! Wino, of St. Vitus/Obsessed/Spirit Caravan, sings on these two songs. I still sing Ratt covers in the shower. It's a great record!! -The Leeman

## APE HAS KILLED APE *Matricide* CD (True Classical)

This satirical Los Angeles project contains members of Leather Hyman and W.A.C.O., along with three theremins and goofy sampled dialog from Planet of the Apes films ("We Want Guns" being my personal fave). Music reminds me a lot of The Butthole Surfers meets Throbbing Gristle, with a slight lowdown, bluesy, cowpoke feel to the vocal style (when they're not resorting to tape loops of Planet of the Apes samples to convey their verbal message). Back comes to mind, too. The musical accompaniment contains all sorts of bizarre effects that range from twisted, trippy acoustic guitar meandering space rock to psychedelic and pounding, thundering, primitive noise (the theremin use is especially appropriate). Impressive release! (www.trueclassicalcds.com) -kopper

## THE ASTROGLIDES *Penetrate With...* LP (no label)

It's true that surf music, the American phenomenon, has penetrated everywhere. This band hails from Israel! The ten instrumentals on this fifteen song album catch it with full dedication to true surf sound. They are big on the theremin at times, which makes me wonder if they were inspired by Man or Astro-Man more than Dick Dale or the Sentinals. In the long run that is all relative, though. What you've got is some pure rockin' music. The covers of "Time Bomb" (Avengers), "Moment of Truth" and "Batman" are all very good but they do show their own ability to write a great surf tune with "Kabbalah Fucker" and "Sewerpipe Ride." They also are more than just a surf band, showing gearhead possibilities with "Horsepower." Now the indifference of this review: Most of the vocal tracks come off in a speed metal/punkish format that I don't care for, and add to it that gotta-take-a-dump "cookie monster band" (to quote Jeff Hess) style vocal that is common in thrash metal bands. Even if you don't like the vocal tracks the album is worth it for some great instrumentals. Contact the band online at www.astroglides.com. 3 1/2 balls. -jAlmZ

## THE BARRACUDAS *This Ain't My Time-A Anthology 79-90* (Sanctuary/Castle)

Pretty cool anthology, even though it omits a few of my personal Barracudas faves, including "Don't Let Go," "Codeine," and "Somebody." On the first disc, only a few Flickin' recordings ("Hour of Degradation," "Next Time Around" and "Takes What He Wants") are exclusive to this collection. Those three songs are definitely essential (and, as far as I know, making their first appearance on CD), especially the latter two. But is it worth it to buy a double CD for just three songs? That depends on how big of a Barracudas fan you are! But wait, there's plenty more: Disc Two is stuff they recorded and released between 1982 and 1990, and is much more indicative of their evolution from a fun Ramones/Jan & Dean party band with songs about the beach and teen romance to a much more darker, folk rock band with somber songs about paranoia, alienation and death. It's still great music, and in doing a musical "history of" retrospective that covers 11 years, 18 singles/EPs, eight albums and various bootleg and compilation tracks, the compilers obviously felt the need to include the latter period Barracudas music as well as a good chunk of the early stuff. Makes perfect sense, but personally, I much rather prefer the pre-1982 recordings found on Disc One, and is mainly why I'm a big fan of the two Voxxx retrospectives available through Bomp! So if you're a fan of the later P.E. Sloan/Barry McGuire and Byrds-influenced "down side" Barracudas sound, then you'll no doubt really appreciate this collection. (www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.co.uk) -kopper

## THE BELAIRS *Volcanic Action!* CD (Sundazed)

Man, if that title track doesn't get you groovin', nothing will! Hot surf/instrumental stomp with a mean sax that just screams "TAKE OFF YOUR FUCKIN' CLOTHES AND DANCE!" Ahem. Sorry. Incredible early '60s LA surf madness here, kids. 22 earth-shaking cuts, including fantastic renditions of "Ramrod," "Mr. Moto," "Panic Button," "Moovin' & Groovin'" and many more. Wax that board, shine your woodie and buy this hot disc from the fine folks at Sundazed Music. (www.sundazed.com) -kopper

## BLACK MARKET BABY *Crimes of Passion 7"* (007 Records/Subartion)

This is what it's all about. This 7" is a limited pressing of 500 made off the test pressing of what would have been Black Market Baby's 2nd 45. It never made it past the test pressing stage after it was recorded in Maryland in 1980. Thankfully it's available now. A great example of early U.S. Punk ROCK. Buy it before it's gone. 534 East 14th St #15, New York, NY 10009 -Ann

## THE BOBBYTEENS *Young & Dumb* LP/CD (Screaming Apple/Just Add Water)

Eternal punk rock teenagers are back again, this time with 15 tracks (16 on the vinyl LP) of the band's hard-to-find singles, unreleased tracks, and alternate/demo versions that date back to their humble, obscure beginnings six years ago in the slums of San Francisco straight through their rock stardom/mansion in Mill Valley/VH-1 "Behind The Music" special days of 1999. This even has three tracks recorded with original drummer, Karen, from Supercharger. The Bobbysteens feature, of course, two ex-Trashwomen, one ex-Mummies (Russell Quan) and one



ex-Spastics. Most of these tunes were written by Phil Spector/Sal Mineo-wannabe, Darin Raffaeli, the boy genius behind The Donnas, Supercharger, & The Brentwoods. Of all their releases, this is probably my fave. I think they sound a lot more like those last two bands (as well as the Trashwomen, naturally) on this which really gives it that beautifully annoying, ultra-trashy South City/Pin-Up/Super Teen teen appeal. (www.justaddwaterrecords.com) -kopper

## THE BOSS MARTIANS *Move!* LP/CD (Dionysus)

Yeah! The Boss Martians MOVE! The production's a bit slick for you lo-fi crybabies, but whatcha got here is rubber-burning Fender guitars and a big organ (we're talking a Hammond here, baby) being moved by a big stompin' beat. There's some classic old-style Martians surf/instro here but some great vocals as well that makes this a "MOVE" from the Boss Martians' previous two Dionysus releases, which were mostly surf/hot rod, into a ballsy but clear classic Pacific Northwest rock'n'roll sound for 14 tracks of fun. Lyrics cover hot cars, hot chicks, working hard, and installing a custom cooler for beer in the back of a station wagon. Their best yet! (www.dionysusrecords.com) -bobi

## BOTTOM *Feel So Good When You're Gone* CD (Man's Ruin)

Let's say you're at a bar and you see 3 nice lookin' rock chicks that look like they're down for anything. The electrodes in your brain are transmitting a signal that displays a picture of you in bed with all 3 rock chicks. There's just one problem. You're not Hugh Hefner and these are 3 chicks that you don't want to mess with. Anger and estrogen are written all over this record. It's a good record. There are a couple of songs that are just O.K., but the rest of the record is cool. I just feel sorry for the poor chap that use to date these lovely ladies. Cos' I know he ain't alive to talk about it. Bottom are great live!! I had a chance to see them here in St. Louis at the Way Out Club. All of them are nice ladies. You wouldn't know it if you happened to stumble in while they're playing. -The Leeman

## THE BRIEFS *C'mon Squash Me Like A Bug 7"* (Sup Pop)

Very tight, bouncy rock'n'roll. "C'mon Squash Me Like A Bug" has very catchy, hum-along vocals. The B-side is missing the fun guitar leads, leaving it sounding almost too perfect. (A reminder why being competent musicians isn't always enough). (www.subpop.com) -Ann

## THE BRIEFS *Hit After Hit* CD (Dirtmap)

In-your-face nasty, snotty power pop quartet from Seattle delivers tight, fun three-chord punk rock that sounds somewhat akin to the Dead Bugs meet the Adult Toys for you local scenerists, or Ramones meet Angry Samoans for those of you not hip to the River City scene. I love every bit of this release and the song that makes my day the most is "Silver Bullet" with the lyrical mantra, "KILL BOB SEEGER RIGHT NOW!" Yeah! Crank that one up along with Nine Pound Hammer's "Bye, Bye Glen Frey" and Mojo Nixon's "Don Henley Must Die" at your next shindig and see how many hoosiers you can piss off. Highly recommended and the good news is this one recently became available again after a quick sellout of the initial first pressing. (PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111) -bobi

## CECILIA ET SES ENNUIS *Avec Les Garçons 7"* (Hillsdale)

Translation: Cecilia & Her Troubles. Some may remember Cecilia when she fronted such French garage punk bands as the Loud Mufflers & No-Talents. With her new band she has turned to her love of French '60s ye-ye. This release shows the band with a bit more of a garage punky edge than their previous two singles, and the catchy title track kick-starts this EP into high gear from the start. Since I'm not fluent in French I can't quite figure out what she's doing "avec les garçons," but it sure sounds like fun! Great fuzz and organ on these cuts, including "J'aime Le Popcorn" which was also on the *Telstar 7"* (minus the fake live crowd overdub). Pretty cool. (Hillsdale Records, 4200 Park Blvd. #158, Oakland, CA 94602) -kopper

## WILD BILLY CHILDISH & THE FRIENDS OF THE BUFF MEDWAY RANCIER'S ASSOCIATION *Til It Is Over 7"* (SmartGuy)

Also known as simply "The Buff Medways," this is Billy Childish (These Headcoats, The Mighty Caesars, The Del Monas, The Milkshakes, Pop Rivets, etc.) on guitar & vocals with Johnny Barker (Daggermen, Kravin' A's, etc.) on bass & backing vocals and Simon "Wolf" Howard (Daggermen, Armitage Shanks, The Prime Movers, etc.) on drums. This stuff is a bit more late '60s oriented (think Hendrix or Cream) rather than '60s garage or punk, although his interpretation of this style is definitely still "punk" in that classic Billy Childish

sorita way. Just as all of his previous bands, this one is a little different, but still fun and soulful, with plenty of distortion and attitude to please even some of his more picky fans. Recorded at Toe Rag, of course. (SmartGuy Records, 3288 21st St., PMB #32, San Francisco, CA 94110) -kopper

## CHURCH OF MISERY *Master of Brutality* CD (Southernlord Recordings)

Fuck!! I love me some shrimp fried rice, but I love this damned record, too. Hailing from the land of the rising sun. No twat, not the house of the rising sun, Japan! This is the Japanese Sabbath that M-TV would never even think about playing. Don't look for any Ozzy, but you will find lommi-style guitar work on this record. The theme of this whole band is about serial killers. My theme is about porn. This is a cool record if you wanna hear some Sabbath/Doom. Note: No dogs or cats were harmed when making this record, but your ears might be when you give it a listen at high volume. -The Leeman

## THE CLONE DEFECTS *Blood on Jupiter* CD (Tom Perkins)

Detroit punk rock it's roll at its finest! Nice aggressive new wave slant too. Ferocious and fun, it's punk rock the way it's supposed to be played! Think New Bomb Turks meets The Registrators with a big ol' hairy noddy Iggy Pop. Great cover of "Tropically Hot" by the Berlin Brats as well as wild and thrilling originals. Produced by Jim Diamond, just like anything worthwhile out of the Motor City. (Tom Perkins, PO Box 970936, Ypsilanti, MI 48197) -kopper

## THE CRACK PIPES *Every Night Saturday Night* CD (Sympathy)

Not as good as I'd hoped, but still quite an interesting release with some bizarre organ treatments and R&B/call and response-style vocals that grows on me more and more with each spin. These guys are definitely of the same breed as the Saledad Brothers, but with quite a more raw, raunchy and dirty sound, probably thanks in part to Walter Daniels' ('68 Comeback & Jack O' Fire, et al) production. (www.sympathyrecords.com) -kopper

## LINK CROMWELL AND THE ZOO *Crazy Like a Fox* LP/CD (Norton)

Link Cromwell, a.k.a. Lenny Kaye, is showcased here in his original 1966 teen combo, The Zoo. This 15-track CD has two decent tracks, the title track and "Shock Me," which are, respectively, the A- and B-side to the original studio 45 on Hollywood. The rest is a bad live recording of the band doing terrible covers of some popular hits at the time ("Out of Sight," "I'm Crying," "Green Onions," "Little Latin Lupe Lu," and a completely embarrassing parody of the "Batman Theme" called "Gross Man.") True, this is probably what most '60s teen combos sounded like live back then, but that doesn't mean I can appreciate this anymore than any other crappy teen band struggling through a set to a disinterested audience. It's just god-awful, geeky crap. (www.nortonrecords.com) -kopper

## DMZ *Live at the Rat LP* CD (Bomp!)

What a fantastic release! This one ranks right up there with the Lyres live Early Years CD that came out about five years ago on Crypt. Two previously unreleased live shows are presented here. The first one is from 1976 and features the original lineup of Jeff "Monoman" Conolly (pre-Lyres) on keyboards and vocals, J.J. Ressler and Peter Greenberg on guitar, drummer Dave Robinson (pre-Modern Lovers and Cars), and Rick Corraio on bass. The second is from their one-time reunion show of 1993. A must for fans of this great Boston band, or any fans of NY Dolls/Stooges-style punk/garage. (www.bomp.com) -kopper

## THE DAYLIGHT LOVERS *Lyle Sheraton and The Daylight Lovers* CD (Sympathy)

Fans of Devil Dogs-style raunchy, drunken party rock'n'roll listen up! This here Lyle Sheraton cat and his crazy Daylight Lovers from Montreal (featuring former members of The Irritations) sure seem to have been schooled in the Steve Baise/Andy G. style of booze-drenched rock'n'roll. This is lowdown, dirty rockabilly-tinged punk'n'roll with plenty of greasy Memphis-style soul. Not a dud on this one, either. Sixteen killer tracks. Definite cross-over appeal that outta easily please fans of both trashy garage punk and rockabilly. -kopper

## THE DEADLY SNAKES *I'm Not Your Soldier Anymore* LP/CD (In The Red)

This release is a lot less abrasive and primal as the first, but it still rocks. Raw, primeval R&B punk and blues'n'roll with more soul than a truckload of Hellies. Greg Oblivian not only produces this one, as he did the previous Love Undone, but he also climbs aboard the bandwagon and contributes his incredible impassioned vocals and four of his own songs, making them a sort of Toronto/Memphis band with a nod to New Orleans Cajun gumbo. And speaking of gumbo, is that a spoon I hear in "Twice As Dead?" Other instrumentation such as piano, organ, sax, trumpet, trombone, and even a violin on "Say Hello" make this especially tasty. Refreshing! (www.intheredrecords.com) -kopper

## THE DECIBELS *The Big Sound of The Decibels* LP (Screaming Apple)

I made the mistake of listening to this album right after hearing that amazing new Yum Yums CD (reviewed later in this section) and found myself comparing these guys to them, which really isn't fair. I'll admit, but I can't deny my instincts to just take this off and put that Yum Yums CD back on. Sure, it's catchy '60s-influenced pop, late '70s mod/beat, and early '80s power pop, and they definitely are talented and able to write decent, melodic songs, blah blah blah, but, ah hell... forget it. Nice cover of The Grains of Sand's "That's When Happiness Began," though. (www.soundflat.de/scree.html) -kopper

## THE DICKIES *All This and Puppet Stew* LP/CD (Fat Wreck Chords)

Would I, a gigantor Dickies fan tell you if their new album sucked? Well, yeah, I would. I've had enough heroes let me down (how about that last Buzzcocks release!) to prove otherwise. And to this, I say, "Dickies fans, raise your penis puppets high! Prepare your mothers for Magoo! Another Dickies album is upon us!" It's been six years since these Van Nuys, California first-wave proto-punkers put out a full-length and one spin proves it's worth the wait. The Dickies are famous for transforming covers into absurd, sometimes hideous punk rock. Fans themselves, they've deftly covered every nook and cranny, from The Left Banke to Barry McGuire to TV themes to Black Sabbath. And, although



original member Stan Lee keeps things loose, it's the genius of Leonard Grave Phillips, both as arranger of these cover tunes, and as a songwriter that has sustained The Dickies into their fourth decade. This disc makes me dizzy! The only thing better would be a St. Louis tour date!!! (www.fatwreck.com) —Matt Bug

## THE DICTATORS *D.E.E.D.* CD (Dictators Multi-Media/Norton)

Here we go! Another high-octane, face to the mat, first-in-the-air motherfuckin' Dictators record! Absolutely horrible album cover art, but once you get past that there's nothing not to like about this if you enjoy good, hard-nosed, ass-kickin' punk rock'n'roll. No, it's no Bloodbrothers or Go Girl Crazy, but it's a damned fine release nonetheless, and Handsome Dick sounds better than ever. Fans of this classic NYC band will not be disappointed. (www.TheDictators.com) —kopper

## THE DIRTBOMBS *Ultralight in Black* LP/CD (In The Red)

The Dirtbombs seem to be the antithesis to Mick Collins previous band, The Gories. Gories had no bass, was about as primitive as could be. Dirtbombs feature two bassists, two drummers and plenty of bottom-heavy noise. It's not hard to tell the difference, believe me. This particular LP, just their second (and first since 1998) showcases Mick, along with Jim Diamond, Bantam Rooster Tom Potter on fuzz and backing vocals, Pat Pantano of The Come Ons as one of two drummers (the other being teen sensation and Italy Records shitworker, Ben Blackwell). This particular release is phenomenal. It's Mick's tribute to the black music he grew up with, with covers of many blues and soul originals. Get it. (www.intheredrecords.com) —kopper

## THE DIRTSNAKES *The Kicks Are Alright!* 10" (Alien Snatch!)

8 blistering punk'n'roll tunes at 45rpm by this German band that features a couple former members of The Cave 4 and The Backwood Creatures. The music combines elements of the Ramones, The Zeros, Radio Birdman, Angry Samoans... basically fun, fast, melodic punk rock that never sounds overdone. (www.aliensnatch.de) —kopper

## DM BOB AND THE DEFICITS *Cajun Creole Hot Nuts* LP/CD (Voodoo Rhythm)

Strange how a bunch of Germans can sound more like an authentic Louisiana cajun country band than most music you'll hear emanating these days from that region! 'Course, that's mainly cuz Deutsch Mark Bob hails from the bayoulands surrounding N'awlins, and back in '91 took his foolishness to Hamburg, where he started the Deficits a few years later. First two LPs were on Crypt, and are also fuckin' incredible, low-down, deranged swamp-sticky blues'n'roll. This, their latest, is about as SWAMP as it gets, mixin' up the cajun roots, blues, and trashy rock'n'roll like no other. (www.voodooorhythm.com) —kopper

## THE DOWN-N-OUTS *Cree Hanger* LP (Creepy Drifter)

This is the follow-up LP to this great Denver band's debut release (Subterranean Beat Punk Blues) on Max Picco. If you've heard that one, or have been lucky enough to catch these crazy punks live, then you know what to expect. Raw, primitive, savage garage beat punk music with sneering, screeching vocals, heavy fuzz and trashy organ. One of my favorite bands at the moment. (www.down-n-outs.com) —kopper

## THE EXCESSORIES *Pure Pop for Punk People* LP/CD (Screaming Apple/Sympathy)

This L.A. band features Rich Coffee, who you may remember from such bands as The Tommyknockers, Thee Fourgiven, The Unclaimed, and The Gizmos! Wife Melanie is not only cute as hell but she delivers the goods like none other. Bossist Dino Everett has been around the block a time or two himself, having played with The Streetwalkin' Cheaters, Sylvain Sylvain, Wayne Kramer, Cherie Currie and others. This is some fun, energetic, Ramones-flavored punk/power pop that should be part of everyone's summer fun soundtrack. www.theexcessories.com (Screaming Apple Records in Germany pressed the vinyl, SFTRI released the CD). —kopper

## THE FATAL FLYING GUILLOTINES *The Now Hustle for New Diaboliks* LP/CD (Estrus)

Took a while for this one to grow on me. This is one of those oddball "Young Lions Conspiracy" secret society Tim Kerr-inspired releases, with an obvious rhythm & blues slant to it's noisy, spastic rock'n'roll. Lotsa call-and-response urgency and some interesting "wretched twang sorcery, solid low-end science, explosive percussion and wretched diatribes with sultry hip gyrations." True, a couple of tracks are still downright ANNOYING to me (like "Role Models"), but there's too much wildness going on within these grooves to pass this off as a nothing release. Much of the tracks are quirky, crazy, eccentric rockers that grab hold and shake you to your core in a very unsettling, rhythmic way. Like a snake outta Hell, baby. (www.estrus.com) —kopper

## FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM *Welcome to the Octagon* CD (Estrus)

I like these guys. They're loud, in-your-face, and soulful as fuck. Slide guitar by Tim Kerr. Hammond organ. Screaming vocals. Point-peeling punk'n'soul that hits HARD and knocks you flat on your ass, so take my advice and be sure to scatter pillows around the room before cranking this one up, babies. This is their third full-length release and it's a mess of chaotic, unrelenting rock'n'roll with a mighty big sound that is sure to rattle your pathetic cranium cream pie filling to its stringy stem. Heavy guitar that would make most neo-metal bands cry in their cheese soup. My neck hurts. (www.estrus.com) —kopper

## THE FLAKES *Wanna Meet The Flakes?* 7" (Lipstick Records)

Here we go again! Dig these sounds! Russell Quan (see also The Mummies, Bobbyteens, Dukes of Hamburg, etc.) and Brett Stillo (Count Backwards, Maybelines) and company are back with another two-song lo-fi primitive rock'n'roll romp with "Bad Girl" and "Hangup!" The A-side sounds like it could be an early Stones tune with it's R&B groove, whereas the flip has more of that same rockabilly/Chuck Berry-type crud ya heard on their first 7", reviewed in the last HIAMB. Great single. Get it. Lipstick Records, 1154 Powell St., Oakland, CA 94608 —kopper

## THE FLESHSTONES *Solid Gold Sound* LP/CD (Blood Red)

What a disappointment... I've tried to listen to this one many times to figure out what is wrong here and I get the same impression every time: nosoul, no sweat, no songwriting, nothing but a hoarse, out-of-breath Peter Zarella hacking out uninspired lyrics dubbed over lame instrumental back up. I keep hoping that it was just flat production, but they really do sound uninspired and washed up. Nearly 20 years after their classic LP *Hexbreaker*, it sounds as if these guys have run out of gas but not out of crack money. Hell, this doesn't even live up to the so-so *Hitsburg Revisited* LP that came out in '99 on Telstar. These guys need to re-examine their formula used on that LP or the incredible '97 release, *Hitsburg USA!* and hope to God they can get back to a decent sounding LP next time out. (www.surftrio.com/bloodred.html) —bobt

## GEIN AND THE GRAVE ROBBERS *Hang Ten With...* CD (Necro-Tone)

Pretty decent lo-fi surf trash here from Boston. They call themselves "Boston's premier instrumental Horror Surf quartet," which makes me wonder how many others of that genre are floating around Bantam! Lotsa reverb, makeup, costumes, and decorations when they play live, according to their press sheet. While this CD has some really interesting cuts, it's no doubt to me that these guys (and gal) are a much better live band than they are sounding on this disc. If you dig Ghostly Ones-style spooky surf music, you might just like this. (www.GeinAndTheGraveroobers.com) —kopper

## HOLLY GLOUGHTLY *Singles Round-Up* 2xLP/CD (Damaged Goods)

Ex-Headcoates shines very brightly on this collection of her fantastic solo singles from the mid- to late-'90s. Her voice never fails to send shivers up my spine. Dare I say I like this better than the new Detroit Cobras? Beautifully groovy R&B-flavored seductive punk melodies with that obvious Billy Childish influence and wonderful Toe Rag analog sound. Plenty of fuzz and rawness to keep you more hardcore garage punk fans happy, too. 24 tracks. Essential. —kopper

## GREENLEAF *Revolution Rock* CD (Molten Universe)

I recently had rented some new porn videos from my favourite porn shop. I get home and see a package had arrived via mail to my crib. It was my order from Molten Universe Records. I wanted to check out the porn that featured nuns doing circus midgits, but at the same time I wanted to check out the new Greenleaf CD. I gave in to the Greeleaf CD. It fucking rocks!! It's their version of *Desert Sessions* done Swedish Erotica-style. It's like Hawkwind meets Lucifer's Friend (1st record). It features 2 members from Dozer, 1 member from Lowrider and 1 member from Demon Cleaner. When you hear that Hammond organ in the background, make sure you have the best herb available. —The Leeman

## THE GUESS WHO *Shakin' All Over!* LP/CD (Sundazed)

Great release! The band's cover of Johnny Kidd & The Pirates' "Shakin' All Over" is a creepy, quivering rock'n'roll classic that ranks up their with the best of what 1965 had to offer. This Winniebag band had some intense rockin' stuff that was recorded between '63 and '67, and it's all here for you to enjoy. 24 tracks, some of which not seeing the light of day in over 30 years, this LP will make a great addition to any '60s garage/punk/beat fanatic's collection. —kopper

## HATED YOUTH *Hardcore Rules* 7" (Burrito)

Not to judge a book by its cover, but come on... Early '80s Florida Hardcore punks that only had three songs on the mini-classic *We Can't Help It If We're From Florida* compilation. Obviously a total labor of love for Bob Suren/ Burrito Records. Twelve energetic (if not fairly generic) '83 hardcore blasts. Nothing earth-shattering, but a good listen nonetheless. Nice package. Burrito Records thru Sound Idea-PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509-3204. —Jason Rerun

## HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE *Makes Your Cock Big* 7" (Rock'n'Roll Blitzkrieg)

Another band with lotsa buzz around 'em. This is the first heard by this dork's ears. Hailing from Sweden and playing total fast outta control punk. Teetering on that almost hardcore line, but not falling into that mess. Raw as fuck and I'm sure a blast live. I need to hear more. I'm interested, but not convinced. PO Box 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712. —Jason Rerun

## THE HORMONALS *Hormone Hog* LP/CD (Voodoo Rhythm)

Sleazy, trashy, swingin' rockabilly that if you didn't know better, would make you do a double-take at that lead vocal, which sounds amazingly similar to one Rev. Horton Heat! Could be his long-lost twin? Doubt it. Singer Andy, a Scotland lad, has a history of playing in HC punk bands as well as the splatter horror show band, Spamballie. Sasso and Paolo are Italians who played in The Rebel Cats and other jazz and country bands previously. Fuckin' KILLER authentic rockabilly/swing sound, complete with great slappin' on that upright bass, some groovy sax, and crazy drop-in effects now & then. This has the power to move your ass! (www.voodooorhythm.com) —kopper

## INTIMATE FAGS self-titled CD (Rip Off)

I gave this release about five or six spins before coming right out and saying it's the biggest disappointment for me yet for Rip Off. Good thing I did, cuz it's not that much of a disappointment after all. This is actually pretty cool shit. I seem to be getting into it more and more with each listen. And today I found myself even bobbing my head and tapping my foot to it, so it mustn't be THAT bad, right? Vocals still sound a bit flat to me, but nonetheless it's good clean Japanese simplistic punk rock fun in the style of old L.A. What?/Dangerhouse stuff with some interesting melodies and crunchiness. Try it, I bet you'll like it. (www.ripoffrecords.org) —kopper

## KING BROTHERS self-titled LP/CD (In The Red)

Think The Michelle Gun Elephant meets The Registrators, only (unfortunately) not quite as good as either. Supposedly these guys are incredible live, having gained quite a reputation opening for the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion & Boss Hog, but this CD leaves me cold. Just doesn't move me. Typical bassless noise, feedback, and intense, searing, unintelligible vocals, but Guitar Wolf they ain't. (www.intheredrecords.com) —kopper

## THE KING NORMALS 4-song 7" (Hillsdale)

The Barons of Beat are back with an incredible lo-fi release from the label that's the culture of tone in hi-fi, Johnny Bartlett's Hillsdale Records. This fine slab

showcases four tunes, the best of which are amazing beatably covers of Elvis' "Adam and Evil" and "Night Rider." Highly recommended. (www.hillsdalerecords.com) —kopper

## THE KRONTJONG DEVILS *Sizzling Sampan & Other Favorites!* 7" (Double Crown)

Very hot surf release by these Dutch cats. The title track is my fave, but the rest is just as great. "The Rafter," "K-2," and a cool cover of "Land Beyond the Moon." One of my favorite surf/instro releases of the year, for sure. Great follow-up to their excellent On Tour CD on Telstar. (www.dbicrown.com) —kopper

## THE LADONNAS *Complicated Fun* LP/CD (Scooch Pooch)

High-octane, throttle-wide-open hard rockin' sound power driven by Gibsons and Marshall or Boogie amps (got that killer '70s boogie rock bite as opposed to the '60s fuzz sound) from this Denver band. Not punk but a bit like Motorhead, Social Distortion and Neil Young. A little too slick on the production to really grab ya by the nads, though. (www.scoochpooch.com) —bobt

## THE LEGENDARY INVISIBLE MEN *Come Get Somel* LP/CD (Dionysus)

They rip off the masks, let their hair down and rip up the tunes with raw fuzz-saw guitars for a heavy sound complimented by MCS-style vocals and old pre-"Reaper" B.O.C.-style guitar-driven garage rock on this, their second full-length release. Extremely talented ex-Bombars members throw down on 12 tunes about bad deals, love gone wrong, and the stoner's blues. Fuck yeah. (www.dionysusrecords.com) —bobt

## LEWD s/t 7" (702 Records)

Forget that this is another old punk band reunited and you'll love this record for all the same reasons we love the Lewd of the '70s/'80s. Great guitar melody paired with the ruff voice that makes the Lewd almost as great as you remember it. The A-side's "Man in Black" only fault is the cheesy sounding name. The B-side contains two shorter rockers, the 2nd of which (A rerecording of their own "Mobile Home") sounds much like Turbonegro with female backing vocals. Must be the return of Bob Cicc's guitar. —Ann

## MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? *Beyond the Black Hole* CD (Estrus)

Now HERE's a cool thing, a Man or Astro-Man? CD that sounds more like their older, more surfy stuff than that newer, can't-quite-put-my-finger-on-it-is-that-instrumental-mad-rock? sound. Oh wait, that's cuz this is their older stuff, cleverly disguised as a new recording! Yep, it's actually the What Remains Inside a Black Hole album (originally released on Augugo Records out of Australia) with a few changes here and there. It's been remixed, remastered, and regurgitated for you now domestically on Estrus Records, with some fab new design art by St. Louisan Art Chantry. This release gathers together prime single and compilation tracks from the first phase of the Astro-Invasion, circa 1993-1996. (www.estrus.com) —kopper

## DAN MELCHOIR'S BROKE REVUE *Heavy Dirt* LP/CD (In The Red)

Heavy minimalist slide-guitar blues with tons of punk attitude thanks to Dan Melchoir's snotty vocals with authentic British accent. In case you're not familiar, Dan has collaborated with Billy Childish and Bruce Brand of the new-extinct Headcoats as well as recording and touring extensively with Holly Golightly, formerly of Thee Headcoates. Fans of those bands, as well as Tyler Keith & the Preacher's Kids or The Neckbones will no doubt really dig this, as you get plenty of country blues song structures mixed in with '60s-style rock'n'roll and '70s punk'n'soul groove. Took a while for me to get used to his high-pitched, whiney voice, but the rest of band's performance more than makes up for it. Tough, full of attitude, and raw as fuck. (www.intheredrecords.com) —kopper

## MELVINS *Colossus of Destiny* CD (Ipecac Recordings)

The police have a love/hate relationship with people here in America. People love them when they need assistance, but hate them when they get busted. I feel the same way with the Melvins. This record is a noise record. It's not for your average rock fan. I was actually gonna use the money spent on this record by a 12-pack of Heineken. Boy, did I fuck up! You never know what you're gonna get with the Melvins. It's like having sex with a hooker, with no condom. You never know what you're gonna get... or do you? —The Leeman

## THE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT *Collection* CD (Alive)

This motherfucker is so goddamned hot you can't even touch it. This latest slab of insane hard-edged, emotionally chaotic rock'n'roll is, dare I say, their best yet? Could it be? Sure, no one knows what the hell they're screaming about but does it matter? If this sucker doesn't get you to move you're dead, pal. D-E-A-D, dead! In my humble opinion these guys could give The Mooney Suzuki a run for their money. Similar style, but much more explosive. Fuck, just get it and see for yourself. Alive Records, P.O. Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510 —kopper

## THE MIGHTY HANNIBAL *Hannibalism* LP/CD (Norton)

Rudy Ray Moore will tell you he was the first entertainer, black or otherwise, to wear a turban, but don't let that dissuade you from picking up this amazing collection of soul & R&B by turban-headed sensation, The Mighty Hannibal (who also appears as guest vocalist on the new Andre Williams LP, reviewed later in this issue). 28 tracks on this great retrospective, ranging from 1958 and his Big Chief Hug-Um Am Kiss-UM debut all the way through the '60s and up through 1973. Incredible, essential stuff. (www.nortonrecords.com) —kopper

## THE MOCKERS *Living in the Holland Tunnel* CD (One Eye Open)

Happy, melodic power pop with some good jangly guitar, catchy hooks and harmonies. Decent production (thanks to Mitch Easter) and songwriting make this an impressive sounding CD. If you're a fan of power pop, you'll definitely like these guys from Virginia Beach. (www.themoickers.net) —kopper

## RUDY RAY MOORE *Hully Gully Fever* 2xLP/CD (Norton)

Here he is, the man, the myth, the legend... DOLEMITE! Hully Gully Fever is a fantastic collection of this great comedian's late '50s/early '60s greasy West Coast R&B recordings including rare 45s, unissued masters, live recordings & radio spots. That's right, the father of adult party records, pioneer of blaxploitation films, influence to rappers like 2 Live Crew and Snoop Dogg, is also an unlabeled R&B legend! Rudy tells his own incredible story in massive liner notes, including some hilarious rare photos from his personal scrapbook. The LP



version comes as a gatefold set that I highly recommend. 76 minutes of wild old R&B that ranks right up there with the best of 'em. How this guy never broke out like Little Richard or Bo Diddley is beyond me. (www.nortonrecords.com) —kopper

## MOST UNUSUAL SOUND 7" (Nictine Records)

One of my favorite new 7"s of late. These guys are from Torino, Italy, and formed out of the ashes of Two Bo's Manics. This is noisy garage punk blues'n'roll that puts most American garage/black-roots inspired R&B bands to shame. Powerful! Snotty! Meaty! Get it. (www.nictinerecords.com) —kopper

## MR. AIRPLANE MAN Red Lite CD (Sympathy)

Fucking cool-as-fuck lo-fi noise produced and recorded by Monsieur Jeffrey Evans in Memphis. Definitely a Stooges influence here, and I'm not just talking about the incredible cover of "I Wanna Be Your Dog." You also get a great cover of Jessie Mae Hemphill's "Black Cat Bone" plus some primitive, rockin' originals. (www.sympathyrecords.com) —kopper

## THE NEBULAS Hot Raps, Waves & Women! CD (Tiverton Records)

The ultimate in dripping reverb surf rock. This band from Connecticut features Jim Nichols of the 9th Wave, and they have recorded a fantastic demo CD that captures what it is all about. This instrumental disc puts its toes on the nose of the board, dudes! It shreds the asphalt in the tube! You know the fuckin', wanna-be sidewalk surfin', skater kid down my block listens to rap. Why can't he be true like this band? The three originals are just as strong as the four covers on this disc, great songwriting guys! Like instrumentals? Get this. 4 1/2 balls. —JLMZ

## THE NERVE Seeds From the Electric Garden CD (Detour)

Although I think the sound of this release is way too clean and produced, it's still pretty damned good, even though I don't go too crazy over much psych-type stuff. These guys just seem to be trying too hard, singing about gardens and bugs and obscure, altered planes of consciousness. That's not to say that some of these songs aren't pretty good, though. "Crystal Candy Girl" is probably the best track on this, and really sticks in your mind long after you listen to the disc. Great melodies and, at least on that track, the production doesn't detract from the great songwriting. If you're a big fan of UK mod/beat/psych stuff then you'll probably really like this. (www.detour-records.co.uk/) —kopper

## NEW TOWN ANIMALS Is Your Radio Active? CD (Mint)

Nice snot-nosed punk from Vancouver done in the style of the Dead Boys or Forgotten Rebels. Must-have for fans of vintage punk rock, especially Brit-punk. Lead singer Nick is really from England, too, so that ain't no fake accent you're hearing! This album's a lot of fun with great catchy riffs and stupid lyrics. Fantastic cover of The Stripes "Observer," too! (www.mintrecs.com) —kopper

## THE NOW TIME DELEGATION Watch for Today LP/CD (In The Red)

Better than The BellRays! There, I said it. But it's true. This band is Lisa Kekaula, lead BellRay herself, backed by ex-Gospel Swingers organist Kari Luna, bassist Alex Cuervo, and drummer Steve Adkins, whose respective credits stretch from the Grownuts to Blacktop to rockabilly pioneer Ronnie Dawson, as well as guitarlinger Tim Kerr. Not quite as MCS-influenced as the BellRays, but way more soul and blues and some incredible covers. Brilliant gospel blues sound with Hammond organ, and Lisa's got such an amazing voice that really rings through on this better than I've ever heard her before. Get this! (www.intheredrecords.com) —kopper

## THE PANICS I Wanna Kill My Mom CD (Gulcher Records)

Gulcher digs deep into the archives to pull out the near-genius screeching teen punk of Bloomington, Indiana's Panics. With only one 7" ep and a compilation track (see Red Snerts review) under their pimply belts, The Panics get the royal treatment with 24 tracks. Best being the EP tracks (one's a Gizmos cover). The live set sounds pretty much exactly what it is inept punk brats playing a mainly covers set to a bunch of other horny kids. So-so RAW live sound. The Panics 2000 tracks at the end are decent but pale in comparison to "Drugs Are For Thugs" (from Red Snerts) and (not to beat a dead horse) the original EP. Great packaging with nice liners and photos. Worth it for the studio stuff, and die hard scummy punk collectors (myself included) will need the rest. (www.slippytown.com) —Jason Rerun

## PLANET SEVEN The Tomorrow That Never Was CD (Default)

Definitely one of the better lesser-known progressive surf/instro bands around today. Not quite as good as their previous CD, but still some great melodies and songwriting. Not bad! Default Records (www.planetseven.com) —kopper

## THE PLEASURE SEEKERS What A Way To Die 7" (Norton)

This '65 girl group (featuring a teeny boppin' Suzi Quatro) reissue came out a few months ago on Norton. Two great classic '60s rock'n'roll songs. "What A Way to Die" is perfect for practicing any of your favorite dances to while the B-side, "Never Thought You'd Leave Me" is slower, reminding me of smoking cigarettes and sighing over boys. —Ann

## RADIO BIRDMAN The Essential... (1974-1978) CD (Sub Pop)

Can I state the obvious here, please? Thank you. Let's just say if you don't own anything yet by this incredible Aussie punk/rock'n'roll band, then you need to pick this one up first, just to get an idea of what you've been missing out on. Essential, indeed. Kudos to Sub Pop for putting this out. (www.subpop.com) —kopper

## THE REAL KIDS Senseless LP/CD (Norton)

Frenzied live disc by one of my all-time favorite bands. This is a live show recorded in 1982 at the legendary Cantone's Italian restaurant turned rock'n'roll club in Boston, Mass. This particular Kids lineup is the same as their classic *Outta Place* LP (also on Norton) and is a fantastic assemblage of John Felice originals including a ripping nine and a half minute workout of the Red Kids' anthem "All Kindsa Girls," an incredible version of "I'd Rather Go to Jail," plus blazing covers of the Kinks, Mitch Ryder, the Everly Brothers and Eddie Cochran! Get it. (www.nortonrecords.com) —kopper

## THE REDS/SWEET J.A.P. split 7" (Nice & Neat)

You should know The Reds from their amazing Rip Off Records LP from last year. If you don't, you should. Sweet J.A.P. is a band made up of Japanese lads

from Minneapolis that play sloppy garage punk'n'roll. As much as I should like this 7", it just doesn't do much for me. (www.nice-neat.com) —kopper

## THE REGISTRATORS Singles CD (Rip Off)

Fucking incredible Japanese punk rock. This release showcases their obscure mid-'90s single tracks as well as a couple unreleased cuts. Includes their great cover of "Small Wonder 2" by The Carpettes. This is amazing, ripping, frantic lo-fi punk rock fun. Buy it or die stupid and un-Registered. —kopper

## ROACH MOTEL Worstest Hits... CD (Destroy Records thru Sound Idea)

FINALLY!!! A way too long overdue reissue of this Florida hardcore band's stuff. Has both their EPs, comp tracks, unreleased and a few (pretty awful sound quality) live tracks at the end. Roach Motel are definitely in that 12% of hardcore bands that doesn't totally blow. 1-2-1-2 raunchy party hardcore. Would give a testicle to have seen these guys live. Essential. Destroy Records thru Sound Idea... see Hated Youth review. —Jason Rerun

## DEXTER ROWMEBER Chased By Maritans CD (Manifesto)

Former frontman for the infamous psycho-surf-rockabilly-garage-punk combo Flat Duo Jets, Dexter is back with a fantastic CD here showcasing his savage approach to music. I actually like this one better much more than the last Flat Duo Jets CD (Lucky Eye on Outpost/Geffen). Great surf/instrumentals mixed in with some great rockabilly/swing and straight-no-chaser rock'n'roll. (www.manifesto.com) —kopper

## THE SATELLITERS Sexplasive! LP/CD (Dionysus)

These German guys have always been and continue to remain one of my favorite modern garage bands. They've been around since 1993 and are heavily influenced by The Sonics, Kinks, Seeds, Blues Magoos, and '80s garage revivalists like The Miracle Workers, Chesterfield Kings, Mummies, Fuzztones, etc. Very trashy, primitive garage style with plenty of fuzz, Farfisa organ, harmonica, some 12-string guitar and snotty vocals make this band's music an absolute must for any '60s garage fiend. This, their 7th full-length LP and fourth for Dionysus, is definitely one of their best. Great originals and a fantastic cover of "Circle Sky" (from The Monkees Head soundtrack). (www.dionysusrecords.com) —kopper

## THE SCREWS Shake Your Monkey LP/CD (In The Red)

Mick Collins' work with the Red Aunts on their final LP *Ghetto Blaster* planted the seed for what would later become The Screws, as former Red Aunt Terri Wahl is now officially in the band with Mick, even if the other two members aren't as firmly planted and are different from the lineup on the first Screws LP. The latest incarnation includes Jimmy Hole of The Necessary Evils on bass and ex-Dirtclodlight/Tulips drummer Mike McHugh. If you can't get enough of Mick's work with the new Dirtbombs LP, then pick this sucker up, too. Great dual vocal work with Terri. What a combo. This isn't quite as abrasive as the first LP, but it's got plenty of blues and soul. And Red Aunts fans will no doubt flip for "Flip Your Face," with chaotic rhythms and lead screeching vocals by Terri Wahl. (www.intheredrecords.com) —kopper

## LE SHOK A. To N.Y. 6" (Kapow!)

OK, OK, so they're one of the current "HOT" bands. For once a band lives up to its reputation. Their LP (as well as all 7"ers) knocks me on my ass with every listen. I figured this live EP would be unnecessary except for the novelty of the overall package, but was wrong again. This baby packs twice the power that 98% of all slightly bigger records of the last year can even wish for. Good recording, but was kinda turned off by the singer's in-between song banter. He comes off as a shy 12-year-old speaking, but can wait while singing. Oh well, remember M-M-M-el Tillis?? Kapow! Records-P.O. Box 1287, Lake Forest, CA 92609 —Jason Rerun

## THE SIGHTS Are You Green? CD (Fall Of Rome)

Excellent young band from Detroit that sound like a great cross between mod and hard-edged Detroit rock'n'roll. Very eclectic sound that ranges from '60s Who/Small Faces-style influences to '70s Stooges/MCS and hell, even Motorhead-sounding guitar crunch. Killer vocal harmonies round out their sound and make this band an incredibly fresh and exciting sound. And songwriting? Superb! There's nothing boring or predictable about this release. It's got the capability to really draw you in and keep you hooked. Produced, of course, by Detroit wizard Jim Diamond at Ghetto Recorders. Originally released on Spector Records, it is now available thru www.fallofrome.com. —kopper

## SKAREKRAURADIO Feel Pee EP CD (no label)

Strange, demented experimental noise that's actually quite abrasive and catchy! This is just the sort of insanity that the world needs more of. Banned from Three-1-Three in Belleville! Fuckin' hilarious. (twolips84@hotmail.com) —kopper

## SMOGTOWN Domesticviolenceand LP/CD (Disaster)

Sneering vocals laid out over thundering drums and searing guitar work and angry, unrelenting songwriting. Although I don't like this one as much as their previous *Fuhrers of the New Wave LP*, it's still very good. Think D.I. meets Rancid. Socially conscious lyrics and hostile not-quite-hardcore that's sure to get the pit movin'. Makes me wanna don the combat boots again! (www.alive-totalenergy.com/Disaster.html) —kopper

## TOMORROW'S CAVEMAN Today! CD (ChuckleHEAD)

Want my unbiased opinion of this CD? It fucking rocks. Sure, the production ain't quite up to snuff on most of the tracks, but this is one great goddamned band and that fact is still evident on this CD. They obviously recorded some of these songs at different studios (three, to be exact). No matter, it's all great '60s-influenced garage/psych punk (heavy Seeds/Kinks influence) with plenty of power and emotion and a sound that's almost more in tune with the '80s garage revival scene (think Miracle Workers or Chesterfield Kings) than many you hear today. And yes kids, all the big hits are here that helped catapult these freaks to the top of the local garage trash heap (14 originals/no covers), so pick this sucker up. Video for "Pussycat A-Go-Go" to follow! (www.tomorrowcaveman.com) —kopper

## THE TYRADES 7" (Big Neck)

Yow! Love this sound! Simplistic, fast, with an amazing classic punk/new wave feel, thanks in part to great vocals by Jenny Tyrade. This is a side project to the Baseball Furies from Buffalo, NY. Jimmy Hollywood dropped his bass and picked up the guitar, recruited Dave Unlikely from the Trailer Park Tornadoes to pound the drums, and all I can say is this is some killer punk rock, a must for fans of KBD-style proto punk. (www.bigneckrecords.com) —kopper

## T. VALENTINE Hello Lucille... Are You a Lesbian LP/CD (Norton)

Only the fine folks at Norton Records could release something quite as stunning as this and get away with it! Fabulous insane Chicago R&B/soul by this enigmatic performer, including the wacky title track that's sure to elicit quite a few chuckles. This is some twisted, crazy shit that reminds me of a more primitive Wesley Willis. A must for fans of Cool and Strange Music Magazine-type goofiness. (www.nortonrecords.com) —kopper

## THE WHITE STRIPES White Blood Cells CD (Sympathy)

Gotta admit I really dig this husband & wife/brother & sister (whatever the hell they are) duo, even though I think they're a bit over-hyped. This new one ain't quite as essential as their previous two (also on SFTRI), but ya get some fairly decent and highly unique, moody, folk blues no-bass garage punk with acoustic and/or highly distorted electric guitar that's best described as Robert Plant-style vocals over pretty rough and raw instrumentation. Songs range from highly catchy sing-songy genius ("Hotel Yorba" and "Fell in Love with a Girl" are simply amazing) to ridiculously silly, but that's definitely not a bad thing. (www.sympathyrecords.com) —kopper

## ANDRE WILLIAMS Bait and Switch LP/CD (Norton)

The legendary Mr. Rhythm returns with his best LP since *Silky* (In the Red Records). Sixteen killer new down & dirty R&B recordings, six of which are older tunes and ten new ones. This impressive output includes duets with Ronnie Spector ("It's Gonna Work Out Fine") and Rudy Ray Moore ("I Ain't Guilty"). This great release also features early Jimi Hendrix cohort Lonnie Youngblood on sax, backing vocals from soul legend The Mighty Hannibal on "Put That Skillet Away," and ex-Voidoid/Lou Reed guitarist Robert Quine. Uh, need I say more? (www.nortonrecords.com) —kopper

## THE YUM YUMS Singles'n'Stuff CD (Screaming Apple)

Yummy, chewy, sugary, sweet, wonderful power pop/punk that's equal parts The Beach Boys, The Ronettes, The Barracudas, The Real Kids, The Paul Collins' Beat and of course, the Ramones. This collection of their "singles'n'stuff" contains 26 tracks that are sure to win over every fan of utopian power pop out there. I won't even begin to go into the incredible covers included here. I'll just say you need to hear 'em to believe 'em. Totally infectious melodies that never tire and fantastic vocals by Morten Henriksen carried by pulsating, driving rhythm section and perfect powerchords. (www.soundflat.de/scre.html) —kopper

## V/A 920 Blues LP (Trick Knee Productions)

Named for the area code the bands come from (or at least the area code Todd, the guy who released it, is from... three of the bands aren't from the 920-area) this modern Wisconsin comp's highlights are the Teenage Rejects and The Reds (the latter from Texas, both bands on Rip-Off Records) It also consists of three covers (The Damned, The Police-I could really do without the arena rock vocals and lame guitar solo, and The Gories) and 5 other mediocre, typical punk songs. (PO Box 12714, Green Bay, WI 54307-2714) —Ann

## V/A Red Snerts CD (Gulcher Records — See Panics)

DOW JONES & THE INDUSTRIALS—"Ladies With Appliances" FUCKING RULES!!!!!! Ugh... read on if you must, but you need to hear it. Anyway... Always had a crummy tape of this and never wanted to fork over the cash for an original vinyl copy when it did turn up for sale. This was definitely one of those, passed it off as 50% good (due to past punk snobbery on my part) and never listened close enough. Got this shiny new piece of plastic and tossed it in. I replayed it immediately following. I think I've listened to this about twenty times in the last few weeks. Even the once though "new wave" tracks sound great to more open minded ears. Fuck, this rules. Zero Boys, Gizmos, Panics, Jetsons, etc. Buy it. —Jason Rerun

## V/A: Riot City! CD (Ace)

Here's an insane new collection of prime early '60s rockin' instrumental wildness. This is fucking killer sax-driven, hard-on-the-Hammond organ instrumental R&B whomp & stomp from the Pacific Northwest and Jerry Dennon's great Jerden Records label. Believe it or not, there's not a Wailers track anywhere to be found on this, but you get plenty of Wailers-style essentials. A few dunks but considering the ace packaging and in-depth liner notes by Alex Paloo makes this a must-have for you '60s instro/garage/R&B fiends. Plus, this makes a fantastic companion disc to the Ike Turner & His Kings of Rhythm *Ike's Instrumentals* CD (also on Ace). (www.acerrecords.co.uk) —kopper

## V/A: Scarey Business CD (Big Beat)

Great collection of early '60s hormones-on-overdrive punk from three Los Angeles-based record labels (Titan, Modern, and Downey). Classics like Bud & Kathy (Sonny & Cher's punk alter-ego) doing "Hang It Out to Dry," The Wooly Ones' neanderthal "Put Her Down," The Composers' snotty "With Friends Like You, Who Needs Friends," and two notorious 1960s punk covers by the Wilde Knights: the original version of "Just Like Me," (later covered by Paul Revere & The Raiders), and the politically incorrect classic "Beaver Patrol." 30 tracks in all, with extensive liner notes. Fantastic. (www.acerrecords.co.uk) —kopper

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# HOW NUGGETS II GOT HIJACKED BY THE EASTERN DARK

By The Mighty Avenger

"Write for a zine?" So asked the e-mail one afternoon and I thought "Hell yeah! I could do it in my spare time, and deadlines? No problem whatsoever, blah blah blah..." Now it's August 29th (deadline: September 1st) and I'm thinking, "Christ, I haven't listened to that Nuggets II shit for at least a week!" (I will admit that I did listen to a great deal of the first Nuggets box during that week, and also that I threw in the "shit" word above so that everyone would know that I'm all about breaking rules and defiance stuff. Yeah, that's right. This is a rebel song.) But I have been listening to a ton of Clem Snide and The Eastern Dark. For those scoring at home those are two different bands. (Yeah, that's right. I am a music snob. Let's get that out of the way; if I wasn't then why, for fuck's sake [that's for my friend, Le Petit Canadian you know who you are], would I be writing this and you reading it?) Anyway, rants aside, I thought that perhaps Clem Snide might be for a different audience or a later piece (assuming anyone is gonna read my byline again see the lame self-justification above, specifically the "I be writing this and you reading it" part. Pure shit [there's that word again]). That leaves us with The Eastern Dark.

The Eastern Dark developed out of both a general inner-city rock scene in Sydney, Orstralia (that's Australian for beer) and more specifically the fantastically killer but ignored Celibate Rifles. James Darroch played bass for The Celibate Rifles for two years after replacing original bassist, Michael Courvert. James eventually became interested in fronting his own band and left The Celibate Rifles in January 1984. The Eastern Dark formed later that year and consisted of Darroch (guitar/vox), Bill Gibson (bass, piano, guitar, vox) and Geoff Milne (drums). They released one 7", "Julie Is a Junkie" b/w "Johnny and Dee Dee," in August 1985 and completed the EP Long Live the New Flesh in February 1986. Shortly after beginning their

tour in support of the soon-to-be-released Long Live the New Flesh, The Eastern Dark ended in a fatal auto accident on March 4th, 1986.

Half A Cow Records outta Australia has finally done the world a favor and released a compilation of the complete Eastern Dark studio tracks plus a tantalizing 9 bonus tracks (called Where Are All The Single Girls?). This is the stuff. I could tell you all about which cool bands they sound like or who they supposedly ripped off to sound that way or I could simply tell you that these guys were fucking great like every great band you have ever heard and yeah, they were nobodies and are mysteries and remain cult heroes.

It's 10:13pm CDT on August 29th, 2001, and Reverend Norb would be telling me the truth about the hot band of the ([exact fucking]) moment (if he still wrote for Maximum Rock'n'Roll [if I could think of a cool way to slag MRR right here I would so that I could be all that]). That band would be The Eastern Dark if this was 1985 and Maximum Rock'n'Roll was some Australian punk rock rag.

I can hear Nuggets II damn near anytime I want just by listenin, to The Wayback Machine on 88.1 KDHX Saturday nights at Midnight. Ask for kopper and tell 'em The Mighty Avenger sent you.

If that don't do ya, then I guess I can tell you about the Nuggets II box set. I am a professional. The second Nuggets box collects 4 discs worth of incredible global freakbeat and psych from the '60s (with a 1970 ringer thrown in the incomparable Peruvians, We All Together). The selection focuses largely on English groups, but also visits the lands down under, South America and even Canada (The Guess Who never sounded so cool). The set was compiled by Rhino, and if you know anything at all about the way they pull things together then you know that this is a sweet deal. I could rant and rave and name-check some more bands but if we're doing this on a regular basis

then you gotta learn to trust me. This box needs to be in your home.

It's funny, in some ways, that I agreed to write something on Nuggets, 'cos the bands collected in this set are virtually all forerunners of The Eastern Dark. Most of these bands came together in the wake created by the explosion of The Beatles onto the world stage. Some of the individuals looked for music as a way out of poverty; some saw it as an alternative to boring studies at art colleges; and some must have just wanted to rock it. Almost without a doubt none of these bands saw this as their future or that thirty plus years after the fact their two hours in a fairly primitive recording studio would mean shit to anyone other than themselves. That's maximum rock'n,roll.

The world is sometimes untidy, however, and I do have one issue with the Nuggets II box: Where the hell are Los Mockers? Los Mockers formed in Uruguay around the same time as Los Shakers, and were often likened to The Rolling Stones whilst Los Shakers donned the mop-top Beatles role. They were pretty great, and Get Hip Records put out a CD comp back in the mid '90s (The Original Recordings 1965-1967), but for some reason Los Mockers were omitted from this box set. The ultimate injustice? Prolly not and I'm sure that Get Hip would like your business.

Everybody has their own Eastern Dark band, their own great unknown lost masterpiece and their own Holy Grail. This, too, is maximum rock'n,roll. Let us know who they are and how we can hear their stuff. That's what this is all about 'it's my chance to evangelize, to spread the word about rock'n,roll as I see it RIGHT NOW, tonight, stereo on and going strong. Tomorrow I'll be ranting about somebody else and how great they were/are/will be and The Eastern Dark will still be a memory to those left alive. We can still hear them, and hear them we shall.

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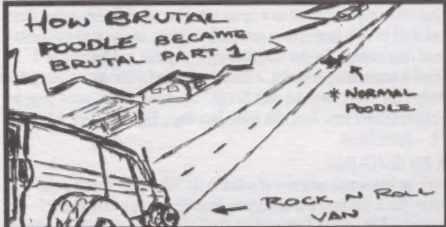
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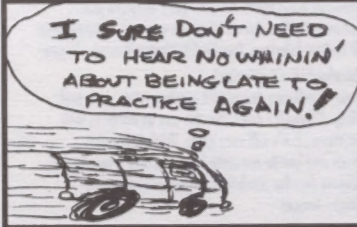


## BRUTAL POODLE By Mike T Horn copyright 2001 www.lamebasement.com


HOW BRUTAL POODLE BECAME BRUTAL PART 1




I SURE DON'T NEED TO HEAR NO WHININ' ABOUT BEING LATE TO PRACTICE AGAIN!

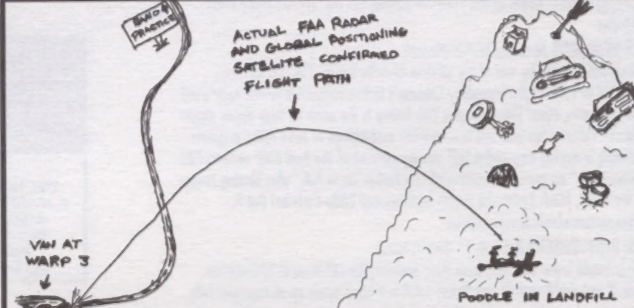


MAN THIS MOTOR IS NOISY!





ACTUAL FAA RADAR AND GLOBAL POSITIONING SATELLITE CONFIRMED FLIGHT PATH



44



# Classes

By Jeff Hess

Once upon a time about 3 days ago,  
I go to a big building with a bunch of stores to get new glasses.

I get an exam.

I get a piece of metal taken out of my eye.

I am told to come back tomorrow.

I come back tomorrow and a girl with a nice bubble butt  
tells me their machine is busted.

Back I go.

The girl with the nice bubble butt is gone and a personable  
man with a crewcut and some suspicious tattoos on his inner wrist  
waits on me.

He calls me "brother."

He says "Come back in an hour."

I go out of the store and walk to the escalator.

A stupid girl almost runs into me while walking up the wrong  
escalator.

Another stupid girl who isn't paying attention runs into me.

Mmmmm...

I walk in to a print store.

I see a print of National League stadiums.

I look at Busch Stadium and notice it still has astroturf.

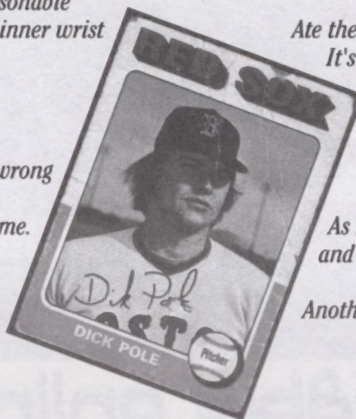
I'm like so "pft."

I walk out.

I go to a popular CD store.

Look at the prices.

And I say to myself "How the fuck does this dump stay in business?"



I walk around some more.

A man with a uniform and a badge and a dog walks by.

I incidentally stroll past by Victoria's Secret.

Some dumbass in a kiosk almost hits me with one of those little  
black helicopters.

Then I see the \$1 store.

There all kinds of crazy games and toys and little spacemen  
and ice cream.

All I bought was a chocolate eclair.

Ate the chocolate eclair in front of the piano and organ store.

It's nice to see a piano and organ store in the mall... er... um...  
ahem,

the big building with a bunch of stores.

I go to the bookstore.

Pick up a baseball encyclopedia and look up Dick Pole  
and Rusty Kuntz.

As I walk out I am met by the personable guy with the crewcut  
and the suspicious tattoos on his inner wrists who says "They're  
almost done, brother."

Another cute girl with her underwear scrunched in her buttcrack  
presents me with my new glasses.

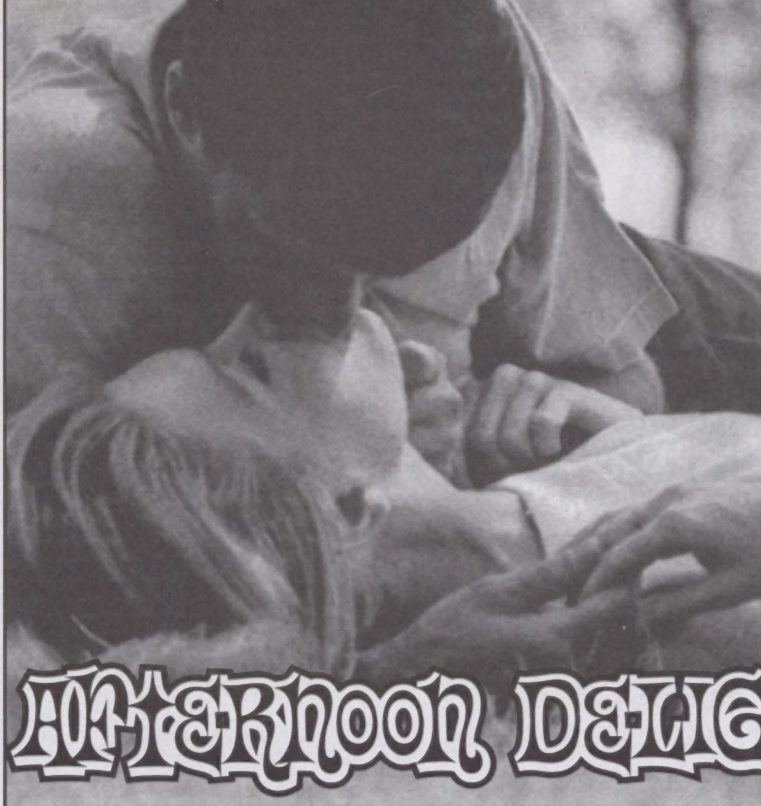
I says "I'm beautiful."

She says "Gorgeous."

I go home.

She unscrunches her buttcrack.

## Love In the Afternoon



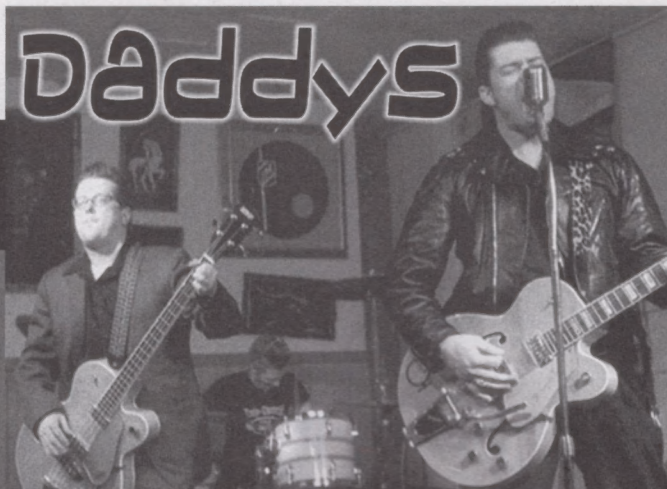
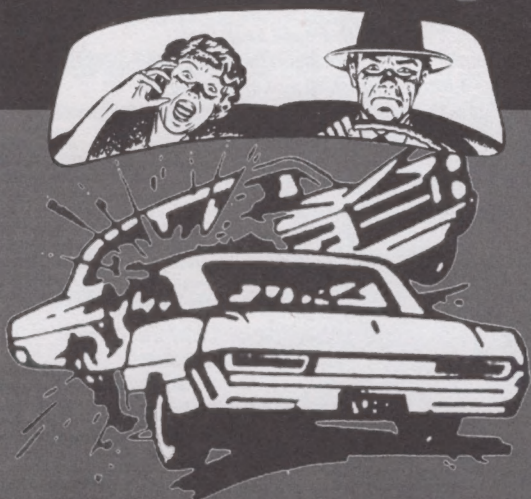
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